

Meet the Asian region's wackiest of the wacky

Filipinos abroad remitted a record \$8.5B in 2004

US blacklists Enrile, imposes indefinite travel ban

203 killed in China mine explosion; 13 still trapped

Martial law victims, dapat bang bayaran?

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Where's Valentine's Day gift GMA vowed to give?



By Norman Bordadora and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

WHERE'S the gift? Valentine's Day came and went and government employees have yet to re-

WHERE'S / A21

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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P18

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Stock market rises despite bombings but peso shaken

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Doris C. Dumlaog

DESPITE the deadly bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos, shares closed at a new five-year high yesterday, with bargain-hunters taking advantage of an initial sharp fall in the market.

STOCK / A21

PNP hunts child bomber

Angry GMA promises to wipe out Abu Sayyaf

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ANGERED by the Abu Sayyaf's bloody "Valentine gift" to her, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered an all-out war against what she said were remnants of the bandit group.

"The desperation of the enemy cannot be underestimated, even as it lies in the throes of defeat," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the Batangas International Port, referring to Monday's lethal bombings in Makati, Davao City and General Santos.

"More than ever, we must not pull back but move forward to wipe out the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf."

Ms Arroyo called on Filipinos to unite against the "renewed threat against our peace and freedom."

A few years ago, Ms Arroyo had belittled the capacity of the Abu Sayyaf to create further havoc, describing them as "isang bala na lang [just a bullet away]."

"Yesterday, she reaffirmed the threat from terror groups: 'The evil of terrorism has only one aim, it is to rule with absolute power and absolute force,' she said.

A man claiming to speak for the Abu Sayyaf has said the group was behind the Monday bombings, saying it was their

ANGRY / A8



THE FINAL TRIP for this RRCG Transit bus happened early Monday evening when a bomb shattered and gutted its insides. A passenger lies burned right where he had been seated at the rear of the bus while it was cruising Edsa under the Metro Rail Transit terminal behind the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati. Two others were instantly killed. Five other buses were damaged. (More pictures on Pages A20, A22.)

P500,000 offered for info on bombers

By Christian Esguerra and Margaux C. Ortiz

COULD one of the explosions that killed seven people and wounded about 150 in the Valentine's Day carnage that jolted the country have been planted by a child bomber?

Or was the boy, aged about 10, merely used by the plotters to carry out their deadly attacks?

Police said the boy had left a bag apparently containing explosives in front of the Ecoland terminal in Davao City on Monday morning.

Moments later, the bag exploded, killing one person and wounding five others. It had contained TNT laden with shrapnel.

Police are now hunting the child, described as about 4 feet tall with medium build and dark brown complexion.

Sketches of the boy and of a man believed to have planted a separate bomb that exploded on a passenger bus near the corner of Edsa and Ayala Avenue were released by the authorities yesterday.

Investigators described the Makati bus bomber as between 25 and 30 years old, standing at least 5'4" with medium build and fair skin.

He was wearing a white shirt, dark pants and white rubber shoes, witnesses told investigators.

Makati police chief Senior Supt. Jovito Gutierrez Jr. said that according to bus driver Joel Bergonia and conductor Elmer Jun Andales, the bomber boarded the RRCG Transit (TWR-304) in the Guadalupe area on Edsa around 7 p.m.

Andales, who failed to notice the culprit's belongings, said the bomber insisted on getting off the bus before the Edsa-Ayala intersection.

Although Bergonia and Andales refused to let the man off for fear of getting apprehended by traffic enforcers, the bomber still managed to get off.

At 7:34 p.m., while the bus was about to enter the Ayala loading zone, passengers and commuters heard a loud explosion from its rear.

Then came the screams of terror.

The bomb explosion instantly

PNP HUNTS / A8

Ordinary people's dreams blasted to pieces

AT LEAST seven people lost their lives and 151 others were wounded in the three bomb attacks that marked Valentine's Day, according to the official count of the Philippine National Police.

The bomb attack in Makati left three people dead and 103 injured. One, a job-seeker, died in

the bloom of youth. Of those injured, a number are hanging on by a thread.

From his native Bacolod City, Jose Marie Balboa Daulong had traveled to Manila to train to become a seaman. He had intended to find work on a foreign vessel, but that dream was snuffed out

when a bomb tore through the RRCG bus in Makati City that he was riding on.

He was only 21 and, according to his uncle Gerry Daulong, had no vices.

Jose was the third and only son among Samson and Ernie Daulong's brood of five.

Samson died on April 9, 1985, leaving the responsibility of raising five children to his widow, a bookkeeper in a security agency.

Jose had promised his mother that he would help put his two younger sisters to school once he found a job as a seaman

ORDINARY / A8

Muslim leaders slam bombings, fear raids

RANKING Muslim leaders yesterday condemned the Valentine's Day bombings, but expressed apprehension that these would trigger police raids on Islamic communities.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) offered to help the government prevent future bomb attacks in Mindanao, while condemning the perpetrators of the Valentine's Day explosions as "evil men."

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the Front was offering its help as a manifestation of its sincerity in the peace process.

"Even when there were no bombings, policemen raided Muslim communities without proper coordination or warrants. What more now that bombings have taken place?" said Datu Amerol Gulam Ambiong, chair of the Metro Manila Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council and a leader of the Islamic Center in Quiapo.

Ambiong told the INQUIRER by phone that he and other Muslim leaders in the metropolis would meet with police officials to issue the assurance that Islamic communities would not harbor terrorism.

MUSLIM / A6



IN THE LINE OF DUTY. Coffins bearing the remains of 10 Marines killed in battle against Moro rebels in Jolo lie in state at Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio. The fighting now on its second week has killed about 25 soldiers and about 50 Moro rebels.

Duterte wants Misuari freed

By PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—"Wouldn't it be better for Nur Misuari to be outside, than inside?" said Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who has urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to release the jailed Moro leader.

Duterte, head of the Presidential Anti-Terror Task Force, said Misuari could still play a major role in resolving the conflict in Jolo, Sulu,

that has already claimed the lives of 71 soldiers and members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) over the past eight days.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo declared yesterday there will be no letup in the military operations against the Misuari group and their Abu Sayyaf cohorts in Sulu.

"Our operations in Sulu will be pursued to their logical end, which is to defeat the enclaves of

terror to open lasting pathways of peace and development," Ms Arroyo said in a speech in Batangas City a day after bombs exploded in crowded areas in Makati, Davao and General Santos cities.

Ms Arroyo made no distinction between the perpetrators of the bombings and the hostilities in Sulu.

"This is not a fight against Islam. This is not a conflict with the

DUTERTE / A20

HOLOCAUST IN MANILA

Postscript: Here lies 'The Butcher of Manila'

Editor's Note: The writer has a doctorate in history and specializes in the Commonwealth period and Japanese Occupation.

By Ricardo Trota Jose Contributor

IN THE EVENING of Feb. 27, 1945, in the darkness of the Department of Finance building (now the National Museum), illuminated only by the light of

candles, Rear Adm. Sanji Iwabuchi, chief of the Imperial Japanese Manila Naval Defense Force, bid his staff farewell. American forces were on the verge of retaking Manila.

Iwabuchi put a pistol in his mouth and pulled the trigger. His body was never found.

Iwabuchi was the man in direct command of the Japanese

POSTSCRIPT / A6



ADMIRAL SANJI IWABUCHI defended Manila to the death.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/06/28/02

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laosag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Catapan	Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

OFW remittances surge to all-time high of \$8.5B

By Doris C. Dumlaog

TAKING UP for the slack in foreign investments, dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers surged to an all-time high of \$8.5 billion last year, or 11.8 percent higher than the previous year.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura yesterday reported that for the month of December alone, OFW remittances reached \$867 million, up by nearly 20 percent than a year ago.

OFW inflows are usually strong in the last quarter as OFWs send more funds to their dependents for their Christmas holiday expenses.

"The annual performance far exceeds the (BSP's) 6 percent growth projection for the year," Buenaventura said.

Through the years, the Philippines has been relying on the huge remittances from OFWs to boost domestic consumer demand. In 2003, OFW remittances pumped \$7.64 billion into the economy.

The amount of OFW inflows now account for about 10.5 percent of the

country's gross domestic product. It also accounts for about 20 percent of the country's total export earnings and about 1.8 times the value of net electronic exports.

OFWs remittances have likewise exceeded the amount of gross inflows of foreign direct investment since the 1990s. During the past two years, annual flows of OFW inflows also approximated 45 percent of the country's stock of gross international reserves.

Buenaventura said the better-than-expected inflows in remittances last year was largely due to the higher deployment of Filipino workers.

Citing preliminary figures from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), he said the deployment of both land-based and sea-based workers rose by 2.7 percent and by 4.2 percent to 669,539 and 225,122, respectively.

He said this reaffirmed "the continued demand for and preference by the labor importing countries for the highly skilled, educated and professional Filipino workers."

"Moreover, increased transfers by

overseas workers to their beneficiaries for the holiday season as well as the sustained marketing efforts by local commercial banks to provide service to Filipinos working abroad also helped propel the level of remittances in 2004," Buenaventura said.

The growing number of Filipinos working abroad has encouraged Philippine commercial banks to widen their outreach in countries where there are large concentrations of OFWs by increasing the number of bank remittance centers abroad. Local banks are likewise strengthening and establishing tie-ups with overseas financial service sectors and non-bank money couriers.

By country, Buenaventura said the bulk of OFW remittances come from the USA, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, UK, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates.

The BSP expects OFW inflows to further surge by 10 percent this year.

To date, the government is mapping out a comprehensive program to encourage OFWs to course their remittances through formal channels and invest in small and medium enterprises.



DPWH TURNOVER

Outgoing Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez shares a secret with his successor, Hermogenes Ebdane, during yesterday's DPWH turnover.

REM ZAMORA

US seizes Garcia assets

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE GOVERNMENT is more confident of recovering some of the alleged ill-gotten wealth that Maj. Gen. Carlos E. Garcia allegedly squirreled away overseas after the United States Department of Justice took over the former military comptroller's New York luxury apartment and dollar bank account.

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo yesterday said he has received written confirmation that the US justice department had issued a freeze order on Garcia's Trump Plaza apartment worth about \$700,000 and a bank account containing more than \$200,000.

"It gives us assurance that we will have something to recover from Garcia's assets in the US once we wrap up our case against him here," said Marcelo.

The Ombudsman said he was confident that the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court would hand down its deci-

sion on the corruption case against Garcia in the next two months.

The US justice department was acting on a request by the Ombudsman which is prosecuting Garcia for allegedly amassing an estimated P143 million in ill-gotten wealth while serving as comptroller of the Armed Forces.

Last November, the Sandiganbayan issued a writ of preliminary attachment against Garcia's assets based on a forfeiture petition filed by the Ombudsman against Garcia, his wife Clarita Depakakibo-Garcia and sons Ian Carl, Juan Paulo and Timothy Mark.

Marcelo said the US freeze order on Garcia's overseas assets was similar to the strategy that the government used in recovering the ill-gotten assets in the Swiss banks of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"It's easier to go after their hidden wealth if we get the cooperation of authorities abroad. We don't want to end up getting an empty account or an assets under another name," he said.

Marcelo said the US justice depart-

ment had checked out two other properties in the US believed to be owned by Garcia but it was unable to directly pin him down as the owner.

He said authorities believe Garcia may have lived in these properties as a guest because they were owned by his relatives.

The frozen US assets of Garcia worth just under \$1 million are less than half of the \$2.3 million estimate made by government investigators during their initial probe.

The investigation into Garcia, the then AFP controller, was triggered last year when his son was caught by US Customs authorities carrying a huge amount of undeclared dollars during a trip to the US. The money was seized by US Customs.

Aside from the New York apartment, Garcia is believed to own a residential house and lot at 625 Vancouver Drive, Westerville, Ohio.

His family is also said to own shares in the IJT Mango Orchard Inc. and IJT Katamnan Corp.

The Garcia family is also believed to have transmitted to the US a total of \$785,630 from 1993 to 2004.

Pagcor says franchise good for 3 more years

By DJ Yap
PDI Research

WE have three more years to go.

So claimed the Philippine Amusement Gaming Corp. as it denied yesterday charges by former Sen. Francisco Tatad that the state-owned firm had been operating illegally since 2002.

Pagcor maintained that its franchise will expire on July 11, 2008 based on provisions set by Presidential Decree 1869, the law that superseded five Pagcor-related decrees in 1983.

In a statement, Pagcor said PD 1869 not only consolidated the five 1977 Pagcor-related laws but also amended "previously existing gaming laws," including PDs 1067-A, B, C which created the gaming firm.

Citing PD 1869, Pagcor quoted a clause in the decree that said, "all laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules or regulations, inconsistency herewith are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly."

Tatad, who heads the Citizens vs Corruption Task Force, had alleged that the Pagcor franchise expired on Jan. 1, 2002, as provided for in the 1977 presidential decrees that gave the firm a 25-year franchise.

According to Tatad, while PD 1869 amended some of the provisions in the five decrees, the term of Pagcor's franchise "was not disturbed at all," a claim that Pagcor denied.

Pagcor noted that under section 10 of PD 1869, which describes the nature and term of the franchise, the corporation was "hereby" granted a 25-year franchise, renewable for another 25 years, subject to the terms and conditions established by "this" decree. The words "hereby" and "this" refer to PD 1869 and not the

original decrees, Pagcor said.

Pagcor operates and maintains gambling casinos, clubs and other recreation places nationwide, and is mandated to give a portion of its earnings to the Presidential Social Fund, which is sometimes described as the President's "pork barrel."

In a Feb. 14 statement, Tatad alleged that Pagcor had been made a "milking cow" by those in power, who appear to have made billions in questionable deals.

Citing Pagcor's 2003 Annual Audit Report by the Commission on Audit, Tatad alleged that Pagcor took out a P600-million loan from two banks to advance rental payments to a hotel in Mactan, Cebu, after agreeing to a 230-percent monthly rent increase without the President's approval.

But Pagcor's public relations official Dodie King explained in an interview that the upward adjustment in rent was an arrangement the gaming firm had with the hotel. The amount, he added, was within the prevailing market rate in Cebu.

King denied also that Pagcor wasted P240 million when it bought 162 condominium units and agreed to buy 256 units more, which until now remained unoccupied because of safety, sanitation and transportation problems. According to the Pagcor official, the units were purchased for some P80 million and these were to be sold to employees on a salary-deduction basis.

On allegation that Pagcor lent money to property owners, King said he was not aware of any transaction of this nature.

According to King, he was surprised that these issues, first brought up last year in protest of a proposed bill seeking to grant a new 25-year franchise, resurfaced.

"We're a public corporation. We cannot please everyone," he said.

Senate eyes tax break

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE is considering granting a tax relief to taxpayers to cushion the impact of any increase in the value-added tax.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said some senators were open to the idea of reducing individual income tax rates as a companion measure to the proposed increase in the rate and coverage of VAT.

He said that two bills seeking tax breaks were pending with the committee, though a similar bill has yet to be filed in the House of Representatives.

Besides the proposed cut in individual income tax, the Senate is now keen on legislating a single VAT rate and lift most of the existing exemptions to widen the tax base, Recto said.

He said the ways and means committee was inclined to adopt the position taken by various groups and finance department officials to have a single VAT rate in the interest of more efficient collection.

Recto allayed fears that any cut in income tax would result in an overall decline in revenue collection, saying "tax transformed to disposable income will be recaptured by the tax on consumption (or VAT)."

Using Bureau of Internal Revenue data for 2000, Recto said a 30-percent cut in the rates for the first five tax brackets would translate to a foregone revenue of P8.35 billion, but would return to the national coffers through higher excise taxes and VAT.

"The conversion of a portion of the withholding tax into additional purchasing power would mean that money that should go to the government can now be used to buy goods," he said.

Instead of doing the spending for taxpayers, government should allow and trust the taxpayer to do his or her own spending, which will still be subject to tax, Recto said.

There are seven brackets in the present individual income tax schedule, the lowest of which is a five-percent tax on taxable income of P10,000 and below. The highest is a basic tax of P125,000 plus 32 percent of any amount exceeding P500,000.

Recto's proposal would retain the tax burden on the highest tax bracket and on the one preceding it, which is the P250,000 to P500,000 taxable income bracket.

Recto, who earlier favored a multitiered VAT scheme, said a single VAT rate, whether it is 10, 11 or 12 percent, would be easier to administer.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Tanker in oil smuggle hunted

By Jerome Aning

CUSTOMS chief George Jereos yesterday said he had asked the Philippine Coast Guard to apprehend a foreign-registered oil tanker which unloaded smuggled crude oil in Mandaue City last week.

Jereos withheld the identity and registry number of the tanker, which had sailed to Romblon after leaving Mandaue, where it discharged smuggled oil to three Philippine-registered barges that were seized by the authorities.

"I have requested the Coast Guard to seize the oil tanker while still in Philippine waters and arrest the captain and crew for large-scale smuggling," the Customs commissioner said.

The three barges—M/V Sushinto I, M/V Sushinto II and M/V Veedol—were seized on Feb. 7 by Customs operatives under Director Nestor Gualberto, the Presidential Task Force on Anti-Smuggling and the Maritime Police.

The barges, owned by the J.M. Petroleum Distributor and Jemelry Shipping Services, were docked at Ouano wharf in Barangay Labogon, Mandaue. One of the barges was transferring oil to a truck tanker named Jude Michael when the raid took place.

Jereos said the apprehension of the wanted vessel could provide the details of the extent of oil smuggling into the country, which he said was causing the government hundreds of millions of pesos in lost revenues.

PTFAS head and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes said oil smuggling caused a P9-billion drop in fuel tax revenues from

1998 to 2003.

Gualberto said the apprehension of the three barges was based on intelligence information provided by a major oil player.

The barges were brought to the Philippine Navy's Naval Forces Central headquarters in Lapu-Lapu City for safekeeping and would be placed under BOC custody.

Port of Cebu Collector Billy Babit has issued warrants for the detention of the vessels and seizure of their cargo.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

Zambales solon cries blackmail

By Philip C. Tubeza

IT'S BLACKMAIL

Rep. Antonio Diaz (LP 2nd dist., Zambales) yesterday told Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez the sexual harassment charge a starlet had filed against him was simple blackmail and a publicity stunt.

Diaz called on Gonzalez at the Department of Justice to air his side after Viva Hot Babe Ana Lea Javier filed a sexual harassment case against the lawmaker the other day.

Javier and entertainment promoter and manager Remedios "Baby Bueno" Coady also filed a case of grave oral defamation against Diaz.

"This is blackmail, he [Diaz] feels that is why they are doing it to him. He

said they were also out to get publicity," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez said he had ordered Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuñiga to create a panel to investigate the charges against Diaz.

In her four-page affidavit, Javier said Diaz forcibly kissed, caressed and embraced her in his bedroom at his beach resort in Iba, Zambales, on Jan. 20, after the birthday party of Zambales Gov. Vic Magsaysay.

'All the way'

She said the lawmaker offered to pay her P50,000 to go "all the way" but she refused.

Coady, who manages another Viva Hot Babe, Jennifer Lee, joined the suit after Di-

az allegedly told her she had been "better-looking and taller than Javier when she [Coady] was a 16-year-old prostitute."

Coady is the former Baby Bueno, a popular fashion model and show producer in the '70s and '80s who was recently released from a Hong Kong prison after doing time for the killing of her lover.

She said she had met Diaz as a young girl and, even then, she claimed, he had tried to molest her. Coady now manages Lee, whom Diaz had originally wanted to hire to provide entertainment at Magsaysay's birthday party.

Lee, however, was not available on Jan. 20 so Javier substituted for her.

But after Javier sang at the party, Diaz allegedly had his bodyguards bring the complainants to his beach resort,

which the complainants said was "definitely" not part of their arrangement.

Diaz then allegedly ordered Javier to "go straight to his bedroom."

Out of fear, "she heeded the order and there she was sexually harassed by accused solon by kissing, caressing and embracing her," the complaint said.

Gonzalez said he told Diaz yesterday "to just wait for the subpoena and file his counter-affidavit."



DIAZ

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CURBING SEX TRADE

Clampdown on Japayuki visas to start March 15

TOKYO—Japan said Tuesday it would tighten requirements from March 15 for entertainment visas in new rules meant to cut down on the sex trade but criticized in the Philippines where foreign remittances provide vital income.

The government enacted the revisions Tuesday, meaning they would go into effect in one month on March 15, an official at the justice ministry's immigra-

tion bureau said.

The visa reform plans were announced in December after the United States put Japan on a watchlist for human trafficking and said many women, particularly Filipinas, who entered as "entertainers" were forced into prostitution.

But the proposal led to protests outside the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines,

whose vast overseas labor force sends home billions of dollars a year, equivalent to 11 percent of domestic economic output.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo flew to Tokyo to make a last-minute appeal on Feb. 3 to his Japanese counterpart Nobutaka Machimura to reconsider the visa plan. He returned to Manila empty-handed and signified the Philippine gov-

ernment's surrender on the issue.

Japan went ahead after assuring Romulo that Filipinos here for legitimate reasons would not be targeted and that Japan would not impose quotas on fewer visas to issue or retroactively target Filipinos who entered under the more lax rules.

Some 80,000 of the 130,000 foreign entertainers certified in Japan are Filipinos. The new rules

will also affect other nationalities, with Colombia, Russia, Thailand and the United States also major sources of entertainers in Japan.

Under the new rules, only Filipino entertainers with two years' performance training at a foreign educational institution, or with two years' experience outside Japan, can be issued visas.

Previously, applicants needed only to show certification in

their own country to be granted visas as entertainers.

The visa crackdown is one of the main thrusts of the Japanese effort to cut down on human trafficking.

Police also plan to require employers to keep ready documentation for foreign entertainers and to ban or restrict home distribution of leaflets promoting paid sexual services, which are illegal but mostly tolerated in Japan. **AFP**

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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Wednesday, February 16, 2005
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jon 3:1-10
Gospel: Lk 11:29-32

As the crowd increased, Jesus began to speak in this way, "People of the present time are evil people. They ask for a sign, but no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah. As Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign for this generation. The Queen of the South will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and here there is greater than Solomon. The people of Nineveh will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for Jonah's preaching made them turn from their sins, and here there is greater than Jonah."

Commentary
We are summoned, like the great city of Nineveh, all of us, from the greatest to the least, to turn from our evil, our collusion with injustice and to honor God, fast from violence and to know the experience of God's compassion falling upon us like soft rain and comfort. What if we only had three days time to do it? We've been given another Lent, another forty days in the desert with our community and our God and we've been given the great sign of Jesus, to follow the Crucified One who leads us to Resurrection life in our baptisms and one day in fullness. We are summoned to pick up our crosses and to follow after the Son of Man who preaches good news to the poor and expects us to be that for those who cry out for justice and life. Lord Jesus, Son of Man who stands with the poor, the broken-hearted, the victims and those outcast from our society help us, from the greatest to the least to turn from our evil and to honor you in our lives. Help us to do it now, this day and every day of our lives. Amen.

Corrections



IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the correction box on Page A8 misstated that Monica Laquindanum—the woman in the photo above with Dr. Manuel Lahoz—was his second wife. Laquindanum was Lahoz's first wife. Lahoz's second wife was Benita Lorenzo—who was mistakenly identified as the woman in the caption of the same photo that accompanied the front page story, "Holocaust in Manila: Massacre of Agustians, San Juan de Dios staff," in the Feb. 14 issue.

IN THE Feb. 13 issue, an Across the Nation story on Page A17—"Illegal logging continues in typhoon-ravaged Aurora"—misstated the name of the mayor of Casiguran, Aurora. According to the Commission on Elections and the Department of Interior and Local Government, the mayor of Casiguran is Reynaldo Bitong—not Jeremias Esteves.

A METRO story on Page A23—"DOJ asks NBI help in Vidamos slay probe"—in the Feb. 11 issue and a follow-up story in Metro on Page A23—"Police eye old case in PAO lawyer's slay"—in the Feb. 12 issue misspelled the name of the murdered chief of the Las Piñas Public Attorney's Office. The murder victim's name is Teresita Vidamo—not Vidamos.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses: glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address: rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

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BLACKLISTED US annuls Enrile visa

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE UNITED States has blacklisted opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile with sanctions that include cancellation of his US visa and an indefinite travel ban.

Enrile told the INQUIRER he was still in the dark on "why my visa was invalidated. I have not violated any US law."

US authorities neither tagged Enrile a terrorist nor declared he's part of some "most-wanted" list.

Some people close to the veteran politician, however, noted the sanctions were the "same prohibitions imposed (by Washington) on the likes of Osama bin Laden and other international terrorists."

Enrile's multiple-entry US visa, valid for another five years, was cancelled "sometime last month."

Ruth Urry, US Embassy deputy press attaché, declined to comment on the cancellation of Enrile's visa, saying "We can't comment on any individual visa case out of respect for the person's privacy."

The Department of Foreign Affairs also declined to comment on the matter.

According to Enrile, officials of the US Embassy in Manila had advised him "not to travel to the US either on official business as a member of the Philippine Senate or as a tourist to avoid any embarrassment" upon arrival at a US port of entry.

"That's what they told me. 'Wag daw muna akong pumunta sa Amerika (I shouldn't go to America),' the senator recalled."

"Initially, they told me my visa was under review (by US immigration authorities). They later informed me my visa had been canceled. But nobody said my name was already part of some list of wanted terrorists. Nobody called me a terrorist," Enrile said.

Old coup links

According to the senator, embassy officials had "referred to some information supposedly gathered by the US government about my involvement in some previous events. Yes, they said 'information.'"

"They did not exactly say what events they were referring to. But

I believe they had something to do with reports of my alleged involvement in a failed coup, I think sometime in the late 1980s (during the term of then President Corazon Aquino)," he confided.

Enrile and close associate ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan, among other leaders of the former Reform the Armed Forces Movement or RAM, had been linked to several destabilization efforts against the government during Aquino's term (1986 to 1992).

When Honasan was still senator, "he was issued a diplomatic passport for an official trip to the US," a Senate staff member recalled.

"But Gringo's US visa had a notation, saying he was subject to special inspection," said the same source.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Honasan for comment.

No plans to visit US

When interviewed, Enrile was sure he "did not violate any economic or criminal law of the United States," stressing "I have no record of involvement or participation in any criminal activity in the US."

He also claimed he had "no plans of going to America in the near future. But if ever I decide to take a trip, say to visit my two grandchildren, who happen to be American citizens, I can always apply for a new visa."

"Now if I want to go, I will have to apply for a visa. It's really up to them to decide whether I should be issued a new one or not," Enrile added.

Washington had earlier redesignated 25-plus militant groups, including the Abu Sayyaf group, the New People's Army (the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines) and Bin Laden's al-Qaida network, as foreign terrorist organizations, extending for at least two years' travel and financial sanctions on them and their members.

Sanctions re-imposed against the groups include a ban on US visas for their members and freezing of their assets in the United States. US citizens or persons under US jurisdiction are also prohibited from providing them assistance, according to the US State Department. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

RP mission to KL to tackle illegals

By Jerome Aning

A TOP official of the Department of Labor and Employment leaves for Malaysia tomorrow with senior representatives from the foreign affairs and social welfare departments to discuss the looming expulsion of illegally-staying Filipinos there.

"The mission shall pursue the best possible bilateral solutions manifesting the positive intention in the region to help Malaysia resolve the matter in the best interests of mutual economic growth and peace," Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said in a statement.

After postponing the crackdown on illegal immigrants this month, Malaysia recently indicated the resumption of the drive on March 1.

The Philippine team will first go to the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur before proceeding to the eastern state of Sabah, where between 350,00 and 500,000 illegal Filipino immigrants are be-

lieved to be staying.

Imson said the Philippine mission to Malaysia jibes with recent moves to improve regional cooperation. Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono earlier met and discussed, among other things, the implementation of new immigration laws in Malaysia.

The DOLE official said the Philippine team would negotiate with employers in Malaysia for the re-deployment of immigrants who would wish to return there on documented status.

The returning immigrants would be assisted in the acquisition of pertinent documents to enable them to return to Malaysia if they so wish, Imson said, noting that the deployment of documented overseas Filipino workers to Malaysia declined by 19.92 percent or 6,319 last year compared to 7,891 in 2003.



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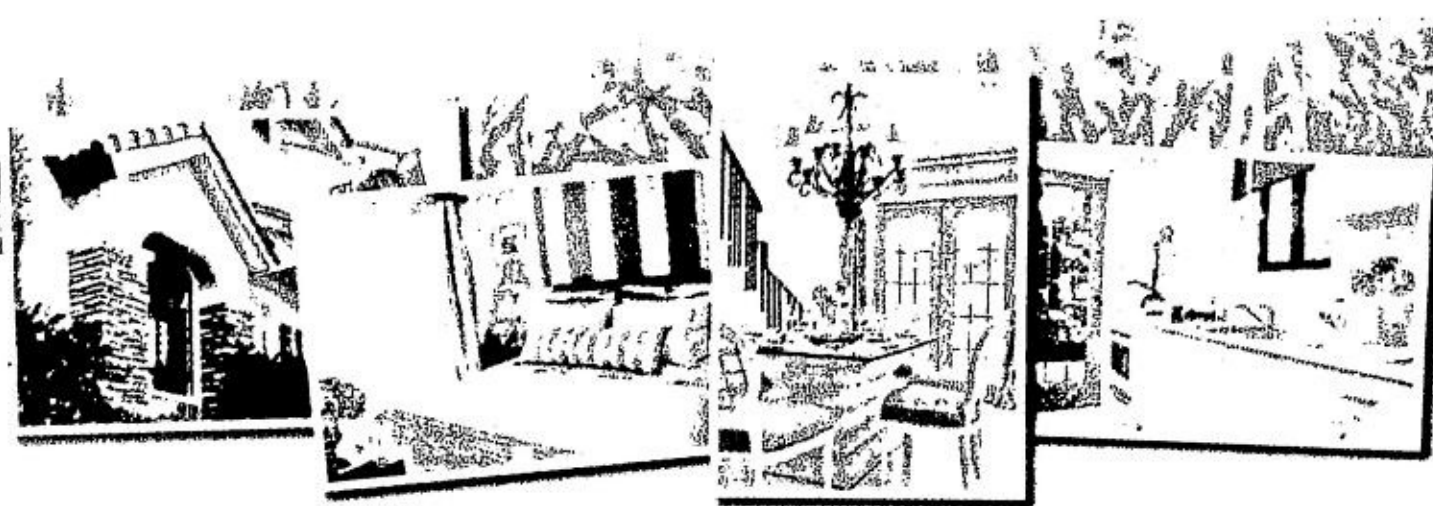
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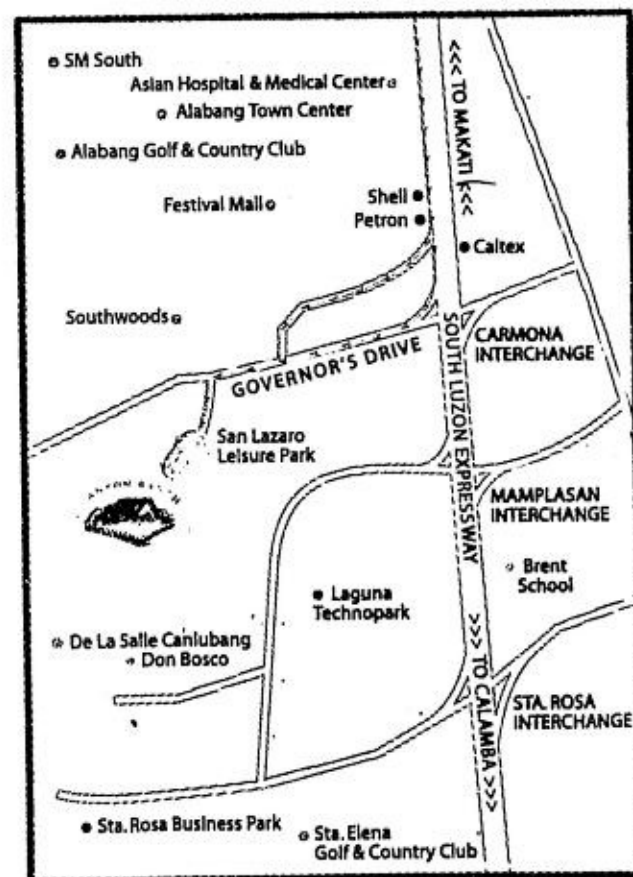
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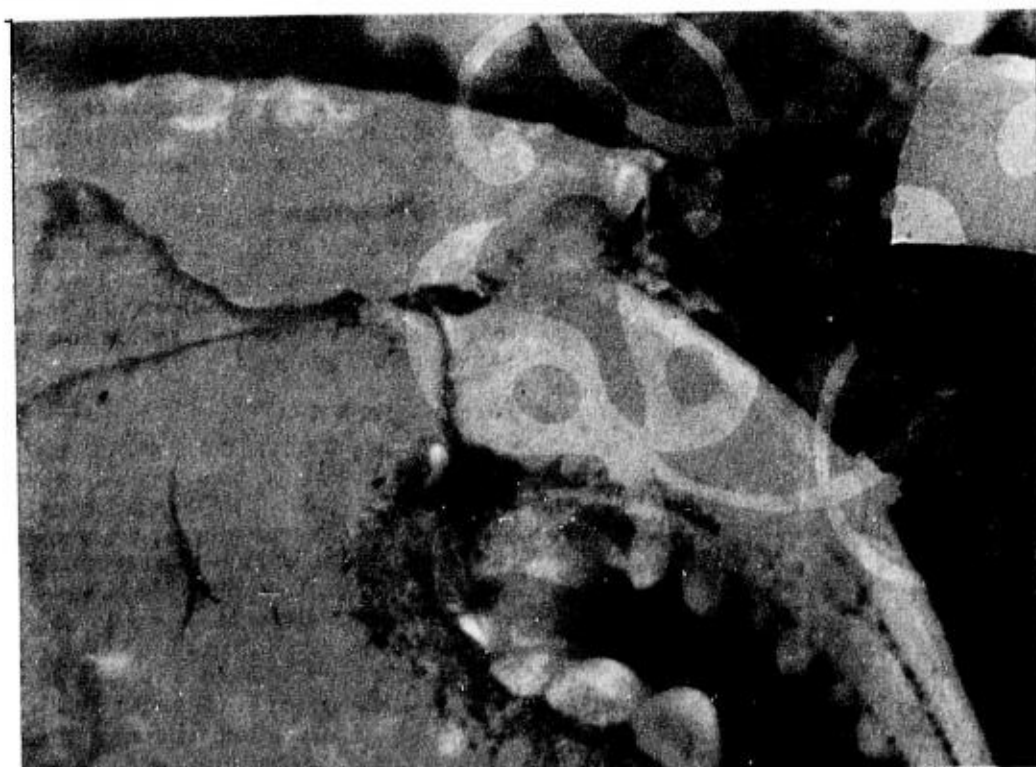
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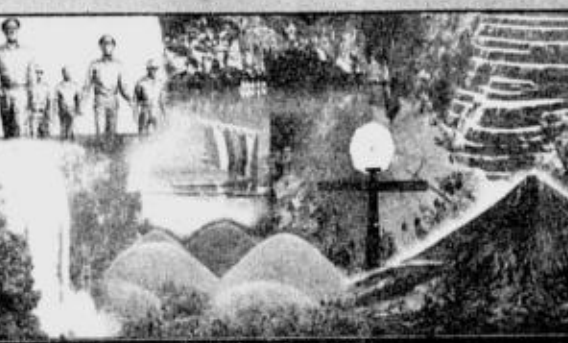
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Is a Third Force behind Sulu conflict?

By Cynthia D. Balana

A FORMER commander of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNL) yesterday said a third force could be behind the conflict in Sulu as well as the bombing attacks in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao.

Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon said he had reason to believe that the conflict was meant to prevent the forging of a peace agreement between the government and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"The continued fighting in Sulu is preventing a fertile ground for a third force to prevent the peace talks between the government and MILF," he said in an interview.

Macarambon doubted the claim of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) that it was responsible for the bombing attacks in the three cities.

He said the ASG was no longer a force to reckon with because it had been weakened considerably due to the success of military operations in Basilan, the rebels' stronghold.

The military had identified the rebels involved in the Sulu skirmishes as followers of jailed MNL chair Nur Misuari, a former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Macarambon recalled that during the height

of the MNL rebellion in the 1970s, foreign nongovernmental organizations were involved in the war by supplying medicines to the MNL and the communist rebels in Davao.

"This third force is probably still intact," Macarambon said, without identifying the group.

But Macarambon believed that the Sulu conflict and the bombing attacks the other day were related.

"In Sulu, Misuari has really many followers. You cannot deny that. But I don't think they were also responsible for the bombing attacks elsewhere," he said.

But Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Joel Virador was emphatic in linking the United States government to the military offensives in Sulu.

At a press conference, Virador said the offensives against Moro rebels in Sulu came a few months after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced the creation of the Strategic Support Branch (SSB), a US intelligence network that sets up spy networks in target countries, including the Philippines.

Only last month, US Ambassador to Manila Francis Ricciardone said the United States would provide assistance to the Philippine military either through intelligence-gathering or direct armed intervention.

Muslim leaders slam bombings ...

From page A1

rorists and other criminals.

He said he and his colleagues would also meet in order to formulate a collective appeal to fellow Muslims not to aid or hide any terrorists so as not to draw suspicion to Islamic communities.

"What the bombers, whoever they may be, did was against the teaching of Islam. They do not deserve to be called Muslims," Ambiong said, adding that the bombers should have spared the lives of civilians.

In the House of Representatives, Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman said the bombings were "barbaric acts against Islam," and urged authorities to put the perpetrators behind bars.

Basher Bagul Alonto, head of the Alliance of Metro Manila Muslim Communities for Peace and Justice, said Muslim leaders were willing to cooperate with authorities to find the perpetrators.

Beyond propaganda

Alonto said the Muslim communities were expecting the Arroyo administration to thoroughly investigate the bombings and not base its decisions on speculations.

"The administration should go beyond propaganda," he said.

Alonto's group, along with "running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes, held a small prayer rally at noon yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino Shrine in Makati as a way of condemning the violence that marred the Day of Hearts.

"If there's anything Valentine's Day should be, it's never bloody," said Reyes, an officer of the clergy-led advocacy group Gomburza.

'Demonized'

Reyes said that while he was not ruling out the possibility that the Abu Sayyaf was behind the bombings—as its spokesperson claimed Monday night on radio—he believed that Muslims were being "demonized again."

He called on the administration to dig deeper and not immediately point an accusing finger at Muslims.

"For all you know, there's a totally different entity who did this, and is laughing at us now," the priest said.

About 20 Muslims and Christians attended the prayer rally, but only three elderly women dressed in white led the praying of the rosary at the foot of the Aquino statue at the inter-

section of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas. "It's not about numbers, we don't need to mobilize people," Reyes told reporters. "We just want to [relay] the message that we don't approve of violence."

Age-old problem

The bombing attacks in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao as well as the armed conflict between the military and Moro rebels in Sulu indicate that peace remains elusive despite the Armed Forces' claim of victory against insurgents, according to lawmakers representing the affected provinces.

The continuing violence also diminishes the chances of a ceasefire between the two warring forces in Sulu, the lawmakers said at a press conference.

South Cotabato Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio said military offensives and rebel attacks in her province constituted an age-old problem that remained unsolved because of the lack of understanding between the two forces.

Custodio lamented that while military and police in General Santos and Davao had received information on possible bomb attacks there, the long shorelines had made it difficult for them to perform monitoring work.

She said there was one policeman for every 1,200 people in South Cotabato, instead of the ideal ratio of one for every 500.

"Also, soldiers are not seen as friendly allies of the people but are considered threats, as far as the residents in my area are concerned. This is the reason people don't cooperate with them," Custodio said.

No sympathy

House Majority Leader and Davao Rep. Prospero Nograles said the President should not be faulted if she decided against a ceasefire in Sulu in response to the Monday bombings.

"These new bomb attacks have killed not only innocent [people] but [also] any prospect for an immediate and peaceful resolution of the hostilities in Sulu," Nograles said.

He said the perpetrators of the crime did not deserve the sympathy of Christians and Muslims: "We can't surrender to blackmail. If they want to stop military operations, they must put down their arms. The bombers, if found, ought to be imposed the death penalty." *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Irene C. Perez, Cynthia D. Balana and the PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Postscript: Here lies ...

From page A1

forces that fought to the death in the battle for Manila in February 1945.

He had been called the "Butcher of Manila" because the atrocities inflicted on defenseless civilians were committed under his command.

Iwabuchi was a Navy flag officer, in command of the 31st Special Naval Base Force, reinforced with crews from sunken ships and other Navy men who could not be evacuated from Manila.

Mission

The expanded organization was officially called the Manila Naval Defense Force, and its mission was to defend the City of Manila at all cost, ensuring the destruction of port facilities, airfields, buildings and other installations of strategic value.

In defending the city, the Manila Naval Defense Force attempted to tie down as many American forces as it could, keeping them from being used in other fronts and particularly delaying the American invasion of Japan. In the process, Iwabuchi's force mercilessly slaughtered many of the civilians trapped in the city.

Who was this man?

Who was this man who was responsible for thousands upon thousands of gruesome deaths and the destruction of much of Manila? He was a short man at 5 feet 3 inches, weighing just over 130 pounds.

He was 49 years old at the time of the battle. He sported a moustache and reportedly had a friendly voice, but his stance was strictly that of a warrior. A native of Niigata, he graduated from the Japanese naval academy of Etajima, where he excelled in mathematics.

As a naval officer, he rose through the ranks commanding a variety of warships. His largest command was the fast battleship *Kirishima*, which saw action in Guadalcanal in November 1942. In a fierce night battle, the *Kirishima* duelled with American battleships, suffered numerous hits and sank.

Source of shame

Iwabuchi, instead of going down with his ship following tradition, was blown overboard and was rescued, a source of profound shame. He was promoted to rear admiral when his time came; but as a kind of demotion he was assigned as chief of personnel of the Tsuchiura navy base in Japan. For a battleship commander, this was rubbing salt on a wound, as he was stuck behind a desk while his classmates saw action in the Pacific.

Insult to navy man

In November 1944, he was appointed commander of the 31st Special Naval Base Force in Manila. Something more of an insult to a Navy man, to be given command of a land force when he had trained to fight at sea.

New assignment

Manila was, at that time, experiencing US carrier and land-based air raids frequently. The Japanese had lost control of the skies, and most of the seas as well. The new assignment was to a place where fighting was sure to break out. He had survived the sinking of the *Kirishima*, but on arriving in Manila he had no intention of surviving the coming battle.

Manila would become his grave. He would inflict as much damage as he could on the city and its residents, preventing them from falling into American hands. And that he did, history shows, coldheartedly.

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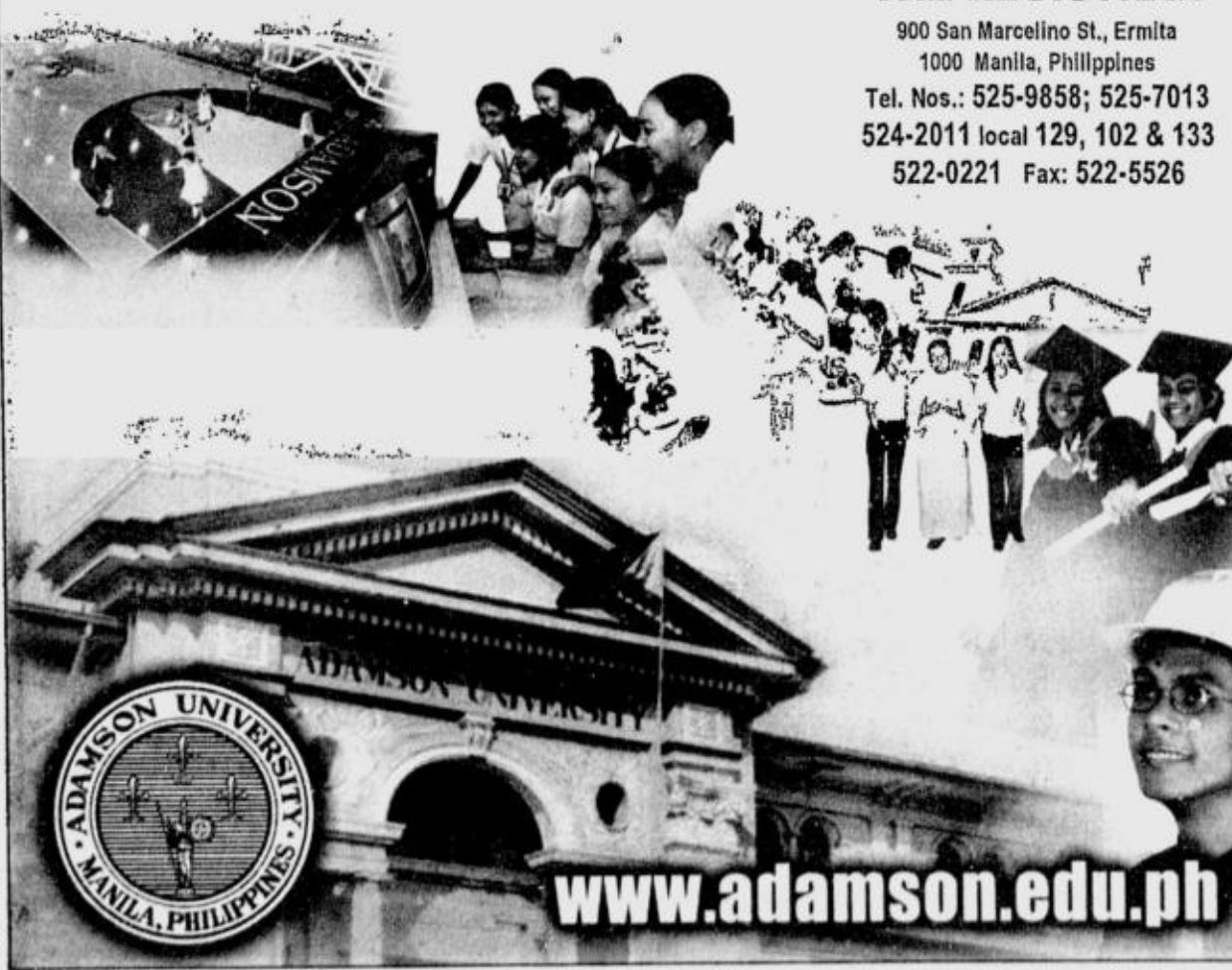
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Kapatiran bats for platform-based politics

IN AN effort to change the way politics is practiced in the Philippines, a "communitarian" political movement will pursue its educational mission with "new fervor, new approach and new method."

This was announced by Johnny Cardenas after he took over the presidency of KPK (Kapatiran sa Pangkalahatang Kabutihan) from Reynaldo "Nandy" Pacheco who is now president of a new national political party called Alliance for the Common Good (Ang Kapatiran), which was accredited as a national political party by the Commission on Elections on May 8, 2004. KPK is registered as a foundation with the Securities and Exchange Commission and was launched in August 2002.

"Now is the best time to undertake a voter's education campaign—an off-election period," Cardenas said.

KPK said it will ask all Filipinos,

regardless of religion, social and economic status in life, "to measure each candidate, policy and platform by how they touch the human person, whether they enhance or diminish life, dignity and human rights and how they advance the common good."

To replace the politics of pork barrel and the politics of personality, deceit, hypocrisy, dishonesty, patronage, payoff, immoral compromises, and the politics of guns, goons and gold, KPK will promote a platform-based politics, the politics of the common good, of virtue and duty.

With common good as its ideology, KPK seeks to promote an enlightened, mature and responsible citizenship from which servant-leaders will emerge, through character building, including good manners and right conduct, values formation, consistent ethic of life, and basic political education.

NewsBriefs

Incentives for Towerville businesses

VICE President and concurrent Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) chair Noli de Castro yesterday said he would invite businessmen to build factories in industrial areas such as the proposed Minuyan Industrial Ecozone in Sapang Palay in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan to spawn employment and economic progress for residents of Towerville in the area.

Towerville houses mostly families relocated from Caloocan City to give way to the North Rail project.

As an incentive, De Castro said, he is proposing a moratorium on lease payment of the properties for one year, provided that the businessmen will extend employment to the residents.

In a press statement, De Castro said San Jose del Monte Mayor Lito Sarmiento was supporting the employment-generating measure for Towerville residents and has approved the proposed incentive.

Both De Castro and Sarmiento said they saw the need for employment for Towerville residents.

During simple ceremonies marking the hand-over of checks representing livelihood assistance and relief goods to Towerville residents recently, De Castro reiterated that the government, through HUDCC and the various key shelter agencies (KSA), is determined to make the lives of families affected by the North Rail project as normal as possible.

Ackerman to keynote women's affair

PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange founder and director Irving Ackerman will be the guest of honor and keynote speaker during the All Nation's Women's Group (ANWG) Valentine cultural program on Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. at the home of Caroline Sison at 15 San Antonio St., Magallanes Village, Makati City. He will be introduced by ANWG president Ditas Posadas.



ACKERMAN

Songs, dances and other surprises will be performed by ANWG members. Highlight of the affair will be the selection of "ANWG Mr. and Miss Valentine."

Program chair and co-chair are Sison and Villa Granada de Guia, respectively. All ANWG members and friends are enjoined to attend the event.

The ANWG, an affiliate of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), counts among its members ladies of the diplomatic corps and other civic organizations.



BALDEMOR



DEY

Dentists' convocation today

THE ACADEMY of Dentistry International, Philippines Section will hold its biennial Convocation and Induction of new officers for 2005-2007 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Roxas Boulevard at 3 p.m. today. Deans and faculty members of dentistry schools in the country will be in attendance. Invited guests are the presidents of chapters and affiliates of the Philippines Dental Association. Guests of honor during the affair are Leonor Tripon-Rosero, chair of the Professional Regulation Commission, and Singapore's Dr. Yip Wing Kong, president-at-large of the Academy of Dentistry International.

Leading the preparation of the convention are the officers of the Philippines Section led by incumbent president Dr. Brenda S. Day, vice dean of the University of the East College of Dentistry; Dr. Antonio A. Baldemor, chair of the Board of Dentistry of the PRC, president-elect; and Dr. Ermelinda S. Galang, secretary.

The affair is supported by Unilab Inc. together with Westmont Pharmaceuticals Inc. and LRI Pharmaceuticals Inc. Doctors Baldemor and Day enjoined all ADI members to attend and enjoy the warm fellowship and camaraderie with the invited guests, especially with Dr. Yip, a world figure in organized dentistry.

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GMA cancels trip to Davao, Zambo, Basilan

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Leila B. Salaverria

ON THE recommendation of the Presidential Security Group, President Macapagal-Arroyo canceled her forthcoming trips to Davao, Zamboanga, Basilan, and Abubakar in Maguindanao.

Cabinet Officer on Provincial Events Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco said he was not privy to the reasons for the cancellations.

At Abubakar, Ms Arroyo was supposed to inaugurate an American-funded bridge with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone.

In Zamboanga, she was to visit troops wounded in the Jolo fighting and was to inspect a Badjao village in Basilan, where the government had built houses and started livelihood projects.

But Ms Arroyo is pushing through with her trips to Cebu on

Feb. 17 and Bohol on the 18th, Limcaoco said.

As part of new security measures, the PSG has even barred access to Malacañang to food delivery boys.

Vigilance vs terrorists

Moving as if Manila had become an embattled city, soldiers and police tightened security at Malacañang, ports, bus and train stations, malls and key facilities, fearing a new wave of terror bombings.

Authorities also scrambled to beef up security in vital installations in Mindanao on the heels of the Valentine Day attacks that hit the capital and the cities of Davao and General Santos.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, for his part, directed all local government officials to be vigilant against terrorists, calling on

them to review existing contingency measures.

"Now more than ever, we must continue our vigilance and get our act together," Reyes stressed.

In port areas, Marines augmented Coast Guard sea marshalls and K-9 units inspecting baggage and departing vessels for explosives, firearms and any illegal cargo.

The Marines arrived in full battle gear.

Coast Guard commandant Vice Adm. Arthur Gosangan also ordered intensified patrols of the Pasig River, which runs along Malacañang and the Pandacan oil depot.

All Coast Guard leaves were canceled.

Western Police District Director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong urged the public to report any suspicious packages or suspi-

cious-looking people to authorities.

The public can text the WPD's 700PIT (700-738) hotline, he said.

Bus operators' appeal

Bus operators also appealed for public help to thwart bombers.

"Although we have given specific instructions to our drivers and conductors on how to avoid such terrible scenarios, we obviously could not do it alone," Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association president Claire de la Fuente said.

De la Fuente said that while operators required bus personnel to check suspicious packages, passengers themselves play an important role in preventing terrorism.

In the Visayas, security was

beefed up at bus terminals, seaports, airports, shopping malls and other crowded areas.

Troops under the Army's 3rd Infantry Division covering Panay, Guimaras, Negros, Cebu, Bohol and Sequijor were also put on red alert.

Binay: Expand 'Makati Shield'

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday asked the Philippine National Police to review its security plan for the city following Monday's bombing of a passenger bus.

Binay urged the PNP to consider round-the-clock patrols and the deployment of more officers on major roads leading to the business district.

He said that, while his city had

Security was also tightened around the island resort of Boracay. *With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz, Nikko Dizon and Nelson F. Flores in Manila; Carla Gomez, Joey A. Gabieta, Nestor P. Burgos and Jhunnex Napallacan, in Visayas*

a daytime population of over 1 million, the Makati Police Department only had 561 policemen.

"I strongly urge the PNP to seriously consider these proposals," he said.

The PNP is implementing "Makati Shield," a security plan launched in September 2003 after a Citibank robbery.

Binay said the "Shield" should be widened in scope to ensure full readiness.

PNP hunts child bomber

From page A1

killed three RRCG passengers.

More than 100 people were wounded in the Makati blast, while nearby buses Rival Transit, Gloran Transit, JMK Transit, Dela Rosa Transit, and another RRCG Transit were extensively damaged.

"It was in a way a good thing that the bus had slowed down while approaching the loading station because the bomb inside was meant to kill and injure commuters in the more crowded areas," Gutierrez said in a press briefing.

Bounty for bombers

The Philippine National Police has dangled a P500,000 reward to anyone who could offer information that would lead to the arrest of the perpetrators.

Abu Sayyaf bandits immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks in a statement made over the radio by Abu Solaiman, self-proclaimed spokesperson of the terrorist group.

But police were not easily buying Solaiman's story.

"He's the same guy who claimed responsibility for the

SuperFerry bombing so (the new claim) could also be true. But we still have to rely on our investigation," police intelligence Director Robert Delfin told reporters.

Delfin was referring to the ferry blast off Manila Bay in February last year that killed more than 100 people. Investigation later concluded it was the handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf.

Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay was similarly cautious, saying Solaiman's statement could be just a "ploy to mislead our investigation."

"We cannot take that admission just yet, hook, line and sinker," he said in a press conference. "We want our findings to be backed by evidence that we can present in court to establish an airtight case against the suspects."

No one excluded

Aglipay said the PNP had widened its investigation to include "destabilizers," communist rebels, the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, the regional arm of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida

Death toll

HERE is the list of those killed in the Valentine's Day explosions.

MAKATI CITY: Jose Marie Balboa Daulong, 21; Bernardo Rosarito, 27, and a yet unidentified woman.

DAVAO CITY: Ronnie Lacinto, 12.

GENERAL SANTOS CITY: Romeo Dalot, Renato Ceno, and Eldrido Olaver.

terror network.

"From the extreme left to the extreme right, they are included in the investigation," he said.

Would that mean that the two suspects authorities have so far described could be affiliated with any of those groups?

Director Simeon Dizon, Region 11 police chief, however, was not quick to condemn the missing boy.

"He was just asked to deliver the bomb," he told the INQUIRER without elaborating.

Dizon said investigators were hunting the man who may have asked the boy to leave the bomb at the bus terminal.

A key part of the investigation

is the type of explosives used in the three bombings.

Aglipay was cautious not to immediately connect the three incidents, saying the bombs used in the Mindanao and Makati bombings were not of the same type.

Explosives used

"If you look at the devices used, there is a difference," he told reporters. "High explosives were used in Manila while another kind of bomb was used in the south."

Curiously, a PNP report which Aglipay had asked operations Director Isidro Lapena to read during the press conference identified similarities in the bombs.

The bombs used in General Santos, Davao and Makati were all made of TNT. The Davao bomb had shrapnel.

Even the bombs found in Parañaque City on Monday—before the explosions occurred—included four blocks of TNT and a C-4 explosive.

Intelligence report

An unidentified person threw a plastic bag containing the bombs along the East Service Road in Barangay San Martin de Porres at around 10:30 a.m., according to

a local police report.

Another question that cropped up in the wake of the Monday attacks is: Were the police completely caught unawares?

Lapena, at the press briefing, read a report about "intelligence information that terrorists will conduct bombing activity in Davao, General Santos, Zamboanga City and Metro Manila on Feb. 14."

There was no specific target, Lapena told reporters.

Aglipay downplayed threat?

Aglipay said a similar threat had been around even before Christmas.

"That's why our PNP went on red alert from November up to mid-January," he said.

Even if the alert level was subsequently lowered to heightened alert status, Aglipay said the PNP never let its guard down because of "continuous information coming in."

He was referring to persistent intelligence reports of a terrorist attack.

The report that came in on Valentine's Day prompted the PNP to "direct all unit commanders to intensify police security operations to preempt any terrorist act and to upgrade security of vital government installations,"

according to Lapena's report.

The measures included securing aviation and maritime facilities, railroads, land transport terminals, and other "places where people converge," the official reported.

So how come terrorists still managed to slip through the supposedly tight security?

Luxury of time

"A terrorist always has the luxury of time, the luxury of place, and of course, the choice of mode (of attack)," Aglipay reasoned out. "Of course, he will make sure that he could carry out the attack without getting arrested."

Besides, it only takes a couple of crazy people to stage a terrorist attack, however tight the security measures may be, Metro Manila police chief Director Avelino Razon Jr. said in a radio interview Monday night.

Aglipay said terrorism was a continuing problem in Southeast Asia. As such, authorities and the public should work together on intelligence gathering, security of vital installations, and management of actual incidents.

"We must be ready to minimize the number of casualties (and) see to it that the crisis will not develop into a disaster," he said.

Ordinary people's dreams blasted to pieces

From page A1

on a foreign vessel.

"He was very hardworking. He wanted to help our family," said one of his sisters.

Indeed, he was working while completing a degree in Marine Engineering at the John B. Lacson Colleges Foundation.

By the sister's account, Jose went to Manila last year to undergo on-the-job training at Ship Manning Co., a step before landing a spot on a foreign ship.

Second Mate Rudy Gonzaga, the school's shipboard training officer, described the young man as "100 percent" committed to his work.

"In Bacolod, Jose's mother has been in shock since Monday night when news of her son's death was confirmed," said Gerry Daulong.

He said he went to her home in Barangay Mansilingan after 9 p.m. to tell her about the unthinkable, which he had learned from a policeman and a barangay officer.

Ernie Daulong refused to believe him because according to the policeman, the dead man's last name was Balboa, not Daulong.

It was Ernie's Manila-based daughter, Vanessa, who confirmed what she had been dreading to hear. Jose's body was at the Funeraria Veronica in Pasay City, Vanessa said.

Gerry Daulong now hopes that the government would help the family bring Jose's body home.

'How can they do this?'

"Ronnie, can you hear me?" the doctor said. "Press my hand if

you can hear me."

But no response came from the unconscious Ronnie "Bongbong" Soriano.

His head swollen and wrapped entirely in bloodstained bandages, he was somewhere too far away to respond to his doctor at the Ospital ng Makati's emergency room, which received some of the worst wounded.

The randomness of the Monday night attack was just too much for Ronnie's 78-year-old grandmother Marina Soriano, who had been by his bedside since early morning yesterday.

"How can they do this to someone so kind and obedient? He's sending two brothers to school," she said, referring to the civil engineering graduate who, by her reckoning, would be the first among her grandchildren to uplift the family's lot.

Ronnie is the eldest of four brothers, all of whom now live with relatives in Signal Village, Taguig, after moving from their native Catanduanes.

Their father, Fernando, a vegetable vendor, stayed behind. Their mother died when they were little.

Employed for the last three or four years in the property development firm San Jose Builders, Ronnie must have been on his way home from a condominium project site in Cubao, Quezon City, that Monday, said his college buddy and neighbor Ronnie Tulay.

"I even texted him at around 3 p.m., inviting him for a drink," said Tulay, Ronnie's fellow engineer and schoolmate at the Catanduanes State College. "He

did not reply. Well, he's not really into texting."

Focused on his family

Tulay showed up at the hospital yesterday afternoon to find his "super-bait [extremely good]" pal hanging on for dear life. He said he was also still trying to comprehend why such horrors could befall the most undeserving people.

"He doesn't even have a girlfriend because he's too focused on helping his family," Tulay said of Ronnie. "For someone only in his 20s, he already has gray hair, perhaps because he's always thinking of his responsibilities."

Ronnie's face was disfigured, and his neck and upper chest were swollen. He had burns on the right side of his belly.

Her red tearful eyes fixed on her grandson, Marina Soriano is not about to lose hope. She indicated to the INQUIRER the steadily beeping ECG over Ronnie's bed and his continued breathing with the aid of a respirator.

Told that Ronnie's suffering could be traced to the renewed armed conflict in Mindanao, Marina, who runs a small eatery in Divisoria, said: "I'm too busy to keep track of the news."

'I scared him off'

It was the rush hour when Zenen Garcia, 28, wrestled his way toward the RRCG bus.

He was about to get on board when traffic enforcers shooed him back to the sidewalk. The moment he turned, the bus exploded.

On his hospital bed, nursing head injuries and other wounds,

Garcia could barely talk. But he was clear about what he had seen—people running in all directions, and his face so bloodied he knew he had to take himself to a hospital.

"I asked everyone for help but they were scared," he said. "Desperate, I asked an Ayala guard to help me, but maybe I scared him off," he said.

Garcia saw an occupied cab, but upon seeing him, the passenger got out and let him in. He and four other wounded victims took themselves to the Makati Medical Center.

"He'll be celebrating his birthday on Feb. 28," said his pregnant wife, Haze. "It was unfortunate that this happened."

Earlier in Bulacan, PO1 Eric Mahinay, 33, waited for a Taguig-bound bus to take him to Precinct 1, where he was to be on duty for the night.

He got off at the Ayala MRT station and waited with other passengers on Edsa who were also chasing after buses.

"I was in civilian clothes, I was in a rush and thinking that I'd change to my uniform at the police station instead," he recalled, propped up on a hospital bed, his face and head covered with gauze and a tube attached to his nose.

His fingernails were stained with dirt and dried blood.

Mahinay said he heard a loud boom—the sound of the bus exploding behind him.

"The impact was really great. I was hit by shards of glass from the bus. Some were embedded in my face. I wanted to pull them off but I was bleeding hard," he said.

He asked around for help, in-

roducing himself as a cop. A jeepney driver took him and several other wounded to the hospital.

'I'm here'

Vivian Eugenio could not bear to be away from her husband, Nardito.

Her face heavily bandaged, she kept mumbling his name. If he moved, she would quickly, blindly, grope for his hand.

"I'm here, I'm here," Nardito would say to the mother of his four children.

At noon yesterday, Nardito said, Vivian underwent surgery on both eyes.

Vivian was seated in the front row of a Roval bus when the RRCG bus directly in front exploded, shattering the windshield and sending shards of glass into Vivian's eyes and face. A piece of glass also tore at her temple.

The injuries explained the blood on her face. "I cried when I saw her," Nardito, a jeepney driver, said in a voice choked with emotion.

Seated a few seats away from Vivian, Enrico Bantad, 28, was on his way to work in Makati when he heard the explosion.

"No, it was not like a New Year's Eve explosion. It was much, much louder," Bantad said.

Bus on fire

He remembered seeing the roof of the bus ahead of him being ripped off; then he "sort of passed out."

When he came to, "the bus was already on fire and I scrambled out."

Bantad felt blood on his face and in his ears; his head was full of bits of glass. He had also become deaf.

He asked around for help, in-

A woman passenger wanted to return to the bus to get her bag, but Bantad pushed her out.

"This bus will explode," he remembered shouting at her.

But at least he could see, Bantad said.

"There was a woman in the bus, the glass shards hit her eyes," he said, apparently referring to Vivian.

Bantad was released from Makati Medical Center late Monday. But he returned to the hospital yesterday to collect prescription medicines.

Vivian Eugenio and 13 other bus passengers and bystanders remained at the MMC as of yesterday.

Casualty toll

The explosions on the RRCG bus in Makati and at the Gaisano shopping mall in General Santos each claimed three lives.

In Davao City, one was killed when a TNT explosive enclosed in an 88-mm mortar shell went off in front of the Ecoland terminal.

Forty-three people were wounded in the General Santos explosion, and five in Davao.

As of 7 a.m. yesterday, 18 of the General Santos wounded had been released from hospitals. A total of 81 victims in Makati had also been sent home.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman said in an interview at the MMC Monday night that the fatalities' families would each receive P10,000 in cash assistance. Hospital expenses will be shouldered by the National Disaster Coordinating Council, she said. *Reports from Christian Esguerra, Carla R. Gomez, Volt Contreras, Fe Zamora and Irene C. Perez*

Angry GMA promises to wipe out Abu Sayyaf

From page A1

Valentine's gift to Ms Arroyo. The President, apparently aiming her remarks at the Muslim community, said the government would not conduct a witch hunt in running after the perpe-

trators of the bombings.

Abu Sayyaf remnants

"The government shall focus its operations against terrorist cells and there should be no fear of a witch hunt. This is not a fight against Islam," Ms Arroyo said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters the bombings could be the handiwork of remnants of the Abu Sayyaf who were trained by the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah.

"Since the third quarter of 2004 and last June-July, we had

received reports that the Abu Sayyaf, particularly the Sulayman group, was planning to bomb Metro Manila," Ermita said.

He also said: "We cannot discount that [the Moro National Liberation Front breakaway group]

may have done this as a distraction [to the operations in Sulu]."

Links of Misuari to Abu

"We can say there may be a link between the Abu Sayyaf and the [Misuari] renegade group," Ermita said.

Asked why the government failed to stop the bombings despite intelligence reports on threats from terror groups, Ermita said: "Well, we receive intelligence reports but you know it's really very difficult to safeguard every place."

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Arabs fear backlash of assassination

CAIRO—Across the Middle East, Monday's assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri raised fears old wounds would be reopened and a fragile Palestinian-Israeli truce could be threatened.

Governments have roundly condemned the killing of the 60-year-old political heavyweight, who was credited with guiding the reconstruction of Lebanon—in particular Beirut—after the civil war of 1975-90.

"The Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stresses its total rejection (of) such terrorist acts that target innocent lives and spread chaos and destruction," Saudi Information Minister Iyad

Madani said after a Cabinet meeting.

Hariri was Lebanon's prime minister for 10 of the 14 years after the civil war. He forged close ties with Middle East leaders as he tried to mend political differences and rebuild his country.

The deputy prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, Sheik Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, urged the Lebanese to close ranks "so that

the perpetrators of this crime, who are the enemies of Lebanon, will not have the opportunity to target the country's unity."

Tension in Lebanon has been escalating since the UN Security Council passed a US and French-sponsored resolution in September essentially calling for Syria to back off of Lebanon, a country where it has about 15,000 troops and political dominance.

Still, such a massive attack—killing 13 and injuring about 120—stunned a country that has been relatively stable since civil

war ended and focused attention on Lebanon's stability.

In the background, many wondered about the attack's potential impact on ongoing Arab-Israeli security talks, which so far have not included Syria and are opposed by militant groups with Syrian support.

Lebanon, largely because of Syrian influence, remains an important part of the Mideast peace equation. The Lebanon-based militant group Hezbollah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, has been launching occasional attacks on Israeli forces in a disputed area near

the Lebanese-Israeli border, and Israeli officials recently accused the group of plotting to assassinate Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to scuttle a fragile truce.

There were concerns that attack might represent a stand against the recently secured Mideast truce or a hardening insistence on Syrian domination of Lebanon. Lebanese opponents of Syria's role in their country quickly blamed Damascus.

Hezbollah, Iran and Syria's president, Hafez Assad, condemned the attack, along with Palestinian militant groups Islam-

ic Jihad and Hamas. Islamic Jihad called the attack a "cowardly assassination" and said only the US and Israel would benefit.

Assad urged Lebanese "to strengthen their national unity and oppose those who are seeking to sow divisions among the people," according to SANA, Syria's official news agency.

Palestinian National Security Adviser Jibril Rajoub, who has been involved in the recent Palestinian-Israeli peace overtures, said Lebanese stability is in Palestinian interests.

AP



A CHINESE worker waits at the scene after a coal-mining accident in Fuxin City Feb. 15. REUTERS

Over 200 killed in China mine explosion

BEIJING—A gas explosion ripped through a coal mine in China's northeastern rust-belt province of Liaoning, killing at least 203 workers in the worst disaster in 15 years to hit the world's most dangerous mining industry.

The explosion, on Monday afternoon at the mine in Fuxin city, injured 22 miners and 13 were still trapped, the official Xinhua news agency said on Tuesday. A rescue team of more than 180 people were working to free the trapped workers.

The blast occurred 242 meters below ground at about 3 p.m. on Monday at the Sunjiawan colliery of the state-owned Fuxin Coal Industry Group, Xinhua said, citing the Liaoning Coalmine Safety Supervision Bureau.

"We have never seen such a big accident before," said an official at Fuxin's Coalmine Safety Supervision Bureau.

"The rescue operations are still going on and the coal mine is still verifying the conditions of workers," he said. "We still don't know the real cause of the accident because the formal investigation has yet to start."

More than 200 workers were underground at the time of blast, he said, largely in line with Xinhua's reports that 238 miners were involved.

Workers reported feeling a sudden, strong tremor shake the mine 10 minutes before the blast, Xinhua said, quoting Zhang Yunfu, vice general manager of Fuxin Coal.

Moments later, gas detectors lost their signals and one of the mine's main pits filled with smoke, it said.

President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao called for officials to take "all possible measures" to rescue trapped workers, state television said.

The mining industry is the world's biggest and is most deadly despite being the target of regular government campaigns to enhance safety and clean up the poorly regulated sector, the main source of fuel for the world's seventh-biggest economy.

China was the site of the world's worst recorded mining disaster when up to 1,572 people were killed on April 26, 1942 in an explosion at the Honkeiko mine.

The 22 injured workers, some with burns, were taken to hospital.

"Most of them are slightly injured, but one of them is suffering from external head trauma," she said.

Liaoning Governor Zhang Wenye was supervising the rescue operation at the mine, which employed 3,100 workers and was designed to produce up to 1.5 million tons of coal a year.

Output at the mine used to be low, Xinhua said, before it was acquired three years ago by Fuxin Coal, one of China's biggest coal producers. It was classified as a "high-gas" mine, with high levels of potentially combustible gases.

A Fuxin resident said many of her neighbors worked for the coal mine. "We are of course shocked and feel very sad about it because people are still enjoying the Lunar New Year," she said.

Reuters

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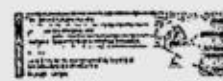
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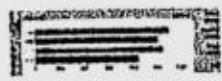
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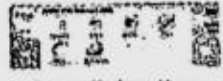
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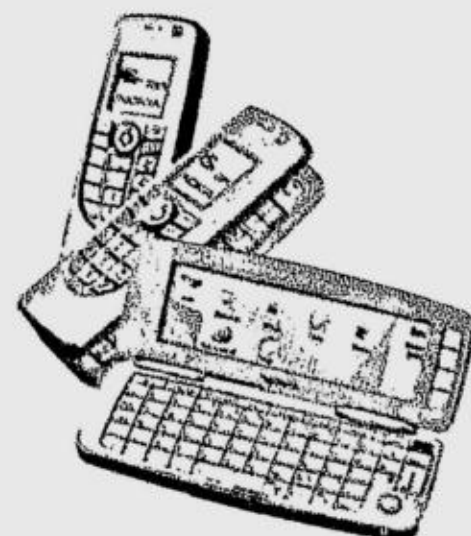
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Bush sends \$81.9-B war budget to Congress

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush sent Congress on Monday an \$81.9 billion package to fund military operations in Iraq

and Afghanistan, pushing the total bill for both conflicts to nearly \$300 billion and the budget deficit to a record high.

Bush urged Congress to "move quickly" to

approve the funding plan and said it would help train Iraqis to take over security duties so US troops could return home.

The package includes \$74.9 billion for the defense department, and earmarks \$17.3 billion to upgrade Army equipment and provide armor plating for all convoy trucks, a frequent

target of insurgents in Iraq.

The rest of the request will be used to boost aid to the Palestinians, to reward war-on-terrorism allies Pakistan and Poland, and to fund the US pledge of \$950 million for reconstruction in Asian nations devastated by the December tsunami.

The White House acknowledged that the \$81.9 billion request would push the federal deficit to a record \$427 billion for fiscal 2005, and White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said, "We don't know what the cost will be going forward."

Bush is expected to request another war-funding package for 2006, after omitting money for that purpose from his budget request earlier this month.

The major initiatives in the package include:

- \$5.7 billion to accelerate the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces to fight an insurgency that continues almost two years after the 2003 invasion. The money is so Iraqis "can assume greater responsibility for their own security and our troops can return home," Bush said, but he set no timetable.

- \$2 billion for Afghanistan, including \$500 million to combat the drug trade, \$800 million for reconstruction and economic development, \$400 million for police training, and \$280 million for "democracy and governance" programs, the state department said.

- In Iraq, which has the world's largest US Embassy, \$690 million would pay for security and logistics at the current embassy compound; another \$658 million would fund a new embassy.

- \$950 million for humanitarian relief and reconstruction in Asian nations devastated by December's tsunami, a \$600 million increase from money already allocated for the region. *Reuters*

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Shiites reach out to Sunnis after Iraq vote triumph

BAGHDAD—Iraq's long-oppressed Shiites basked Tuesday in their electoral triumph as US President George W. Bush formally asked Congress for \$81.9 billion to fund military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Kurds also celebrated their strong performance in the landmark Jan. 30 election and pressed for one of the state's top jobs and their claim to the disputed Kirkuk oil center.

The clergy-backed Shiite list won almost half the 8.5 million votes cast and was poised to take more than half the seats in the National Assembly, putting Shiites in power in an Arab state for the first time in more than 1,000 years.

"It's the choice of the people," said one jubilant Shiite voter, Ahmed Shebab Mahmud.

However, some feared a marginalization of the former Sunni elite could further fuel an insurgency, which has killed thousands and crippled the economy since the March 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

Bush praised the Iraqis who "defied terrorists and went to the polls" while congratulations poured in from around the world for the first free elections in half a century.

Although the 48 percent of votes won by the main Shiite list backed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani was less than it had hoped for, the coalition will clinch a majority in the 275-seat parliament.

The Kurds garnered about 25 percent of the vote, while the list put together by Iyad Allawi, interim prime minister since the US occupiers handed power to Iraqis in June, managed only a distant third with less than 14 percent.

"Iraq is bleeding and we need everybody at this juncture to work for solidarity and unity," said Finance Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi, a leading member of the winning Shiite list who is also seen as a likely prime minister.

There was no official announcement on the share-out of seats, but a complex elimination mechanism in the counting system means the Shiite United Iraqi Alliance should obtain 140 seats.

A two-thirds majority is needed in the National Assembly to agree on presidential posts and to pass some crucial laws, but if it holds together, the Shiite bloc could set the pace without having systematically to seek alliances.

Some observers have warned that a united Shiite bloc holding a legislative majority could seek to impose a heavy Islamic imprint on a permanent constitution, which the assembly must draft by Aug. 15.

The results will only become definitive on Wednesday, to allow for challenges, said electoral commission member Farid Ayar. *AFP*

74,000 years for Sept. 11 suspects sought

MADRID—A Spanish prosecutor said Monday he will seek jail terms of more than 74,000 years for each of three suspected al-Qaida members charged with using Spain as a staging ground for the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

A trial is expected to start some time in mid-March but no date has been set, the National Court said. Spain will be only the second country worldwide to put Sept. 11 suspects on trial.

Prosecutor Pedro Rubira said that for each of the three suspects he is seeking 25 years in jail for every person killed in the suicide airliner attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The three are the alleged leader of a Spain-based al-Qaida cell, Imad Yarkas, and two alleged accomplices, Driss Chebli and Ghasoub al-Abrash Ghalyoun. Chebli is Moroccan while the other two are of Syrian origin.

Rubira said the official death toll in Sept. 11 was 2,973, so each man faces a possible sentence of more than 74,000 years. However, under Spanish law the maximum amount of time a person can spend in jail for a terrorism conviction is 40 years. Spain has no death penalty or life imprisonment.

Rubira also said he wants the defendants to pay a total of euro 893 million (\$1.16 billion) in damages to the victims' families.

The three are among 24 people who are to stand trial in Spain as part of the same indictment. The other 21 are charged with belonging to a terrorist organization, weapons possession, fraud or other offenses—not with actually helping plan the Sept. 11 massacre.

The other defendants include al-Jazeera journalist Tayssir Alouny, for

whom the prosecutor is seeking nine years in prison, and Yusuf Galan, a Spanish convert to Islam who faces a sentence of 18 years.

In a 200-page writ, Rubira said he wants to present evidence that includes more than 100 wiretapped conversations among suspected cell members. He also wants to call Jamal Zougam—a jailed Moroccan suspect in the March 11 train bombings of last year—to testify. Zougam, accused of actually placing some of the 10 backpack bombs that killed 191 people in Madrid, was a close follower of Yarkas, according to court records.

The case stems from an indictment issued in September 2003 by Spain's leading antiterrorism judge, Baltasar Garzon, against 35 people, later broadened to 40.

Garzon charged that Yarkas, a used-car salesman, provided financing and logistics for key Sept. 11 plotters. In the indictment, Garzon wrote that "it has become crystal clear" that Yarkas "had links to some of the perpetrators of the massacre."

Investigators on both sides of the Atlantic say that Spain—along with Germany—was a key staging ground for Sept. 11.

In July 2001, Mohamed Atta—believed to have piloted one of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center—attended a meeting in the north-eastern Tarragona region of Spain that Garzon said was used to plan last-minute details

such as the exact date of the attack.

The 24 who will stand trial are in Spanish custody. The rest of those indicted by Garzon are either fugitives, such as Osama bin Laden, or in custody in other countries. Such is the case of Ramzi Binalshibh, a Yemeni suspected of being a key contact person with Bin Laden's terror network for an al-Qaida cell based in Hamburg, Germany. He was arrested on the one-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in Pakistan and is now in secret US custody.

Those not in Spanish custody cannot be tried in absentia because the charge is terrorism. In Spain, such trials are held only for lesser offenses. Many of those in custody in Spain were arrested in November 2001. AP

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59 killed in Iran mosque fire

TEHRAN—Nearly 60 people perished and more than 200 others suffered burns on Monday when a fire swept through a Tehran mosque crammed with worshippers, police said.

The blaze broke out as the faithful packed into the Ark mosque near the main bazaar in the capital for prayers just a few days before the major Shiite Muslim religious festival of Ashura, local media reported.

"Fifty-nine people were killed and 210 others injured," Mortezza Taleai, police chief in greater Tehran, was quoted as saying by public television.

Media reports said the fire was probably caused by a heater brought into the mosque to protect worshippers from the bitter cold and which set a tent ablaze and spread flames like wildfire through the mosque's courtyard.

"The fire began on the women's side, then spread to the men's," said the police commander. "It was absolute panic, which explains the high number of injured, at around 200. A lot of people were hurt in rushing toward the exits."

Victims had little time to escape. Many suffocated to death as smoke enveloped corridors and the seating area reserved for women.

"My two children were inside. My daughter got out, but I can't find my son," sobbed a woman who gave her name only as Aleme, outside the mosque.

Witnesses said they saw women jumping out of windows five meters up as worshippers struggled to escape the blazing inferno.

The fire was brought under control by 8 p.m., when the dead could be recovered and the wounded ferried to the local hospital away from the devastated courtyard, where shoes and garments littered the ground. AP

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Seoul doubts N. Korea has nukes

SEOUL—South Korea's top policy-maker on North Korea said Monday North Korea's claim to have nuclear weapons was unproven and Seoul's controversial engagement policy with the North would remain, at least for now.

North Korea explicitly said for the first time last Thursday that it had atomic weapons. The reclusive communist state also said it was pulling out of six-party talks aimed at ending a two-year impasse over its nuclear programs because of what it called US hostility.

"There is no doubt that North Korea has 10 to 14 kg of plutonium, but there is no evidence that the North has turned it into plutonium bombs," Minister of Unification Chung Dong-young told parliament Monday.

"We see it as a claim to own nuclear weapons, not an official statement of being a nuclear

weapons state," he said.

Chung also heads South Korea's National Security Council, which advises President Roh Moo-hyun.

A South Korean Defense White Paper released on Feb. 4 said North Korea was believed to have conducted an aerial blast test and has probably built one or two nuclear weapons. US officials and experts say North Korea probably has one or two—and possibly more than eight.

Domestic pressure is mounting on the South Korean government to reconsider its policy of reconciliation with the North.

The conservative opposition said the government's policy on the North has made it "a nuclear hostage" and urged Seoul to reconsider commercial projects and aid under the government's engagement policy with the North.

"There is no reason to immediately change this policy direc-

tion," Chung said. "It is true that the situation has worsened," he said, adding the government would analyze how to proceed on commercial projects.

In Washington, South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon told reporters after talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice his country wanted to focus on diplomacy when asked if Seoul supported the idea of greater pressure.

"At this time we need to intensify our diplomatic efforts," Ban said. "We will continue our efforts through peaceful and diplomatic (means)."

North Korea has been playing a nuclear card to win diplomatic and economic benefits since a standoff that began in October 2002 when Washington accused it of conducting a secret program to enrich uranium in violation of a 1994 accord.

North Korea seeks direct nego-

tiations with the United States, which Washington rejects, although US officials have held open the possibility of direct talks within the six-party framework, which includes South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

The New York Times reported on Monday that in recent months the Bush administration had begun developing new strategies to cut off North Korea's remaining sources of income based on techniques used against the al-Qaida network responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

Asked about the report, which cited unnamed intelligence officials and policy makers, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said, "We have an obligation to protect the American people, we have an obligation to help protect our allies, we have an obligation to protect our respective economies." *Reuters*



HOLY BATH

Buddhist ascetic monks splash water over themselves during their annual winter prayers at a temple in Tokyo Feb. 15. Fifteen monks performed the cleansing ritual to pray for good luck. *AFP*

Archeologists discover ruins proving Roman foundation myth

ROME—Legend has it that Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by Romulus and Remus, the twin sons of the god of war Mars, who were suckled as infants by a she-wolf in the woods.

Now, archeologists believe they have found evidence that at least part of that tale may be true: Traces of a royal palace discovered in the Roman Forum have been dated to roughly the period of the eternal city's legendary foundation.

Andrea Carandini, a professor of archeology at Rome's Sapienza University who has been conducting excavations at the Forum for more than 20 years, said he made the discovery over the past month at the spot where the Temple of Romulus stands today.

It is next to the Sanctuary of Vesta—the Roman goddess of the hearth—just outside the Palatine walls, site of the earliest traces of civilization in Rome.

Where previously archeologists had only found huts in the area dating back to the 8th century B.C., Carandini and his team unearthed traces of regal splendor: A 345 sq. m palace, 105 of which was covered and the rest courtyard. There was a monumental entrance, and elaborate furnishings and ceramics.

The walls were made of wood and clay, with a floor of wood shavings and pressed turf. It was tests on the clay that allowed the archeologists to confirm the age of the find.

Carandini said that the residence had "absolutely extraordinary dimensions, dimensions not formerly known."

"It could be nothing other than the royal palace," he said, adding that at that period the average abode measured about one-tenth of the size of the uncovered residence.

Carandini also found a hut where vestal virgins are believed to have lit a sacred flame.

Eugenio La Rocca, the superintendent for monuments for the city of Rome, said Carandini's interpretation of the ruins appears to be accurate. *AP*

Palestinians fete Israel's return of militant remains

GAZA—Thousands of Palestinians, some wearing mock suicide-bomber belts, lined Gaza roads on Monday to welcome home the remains of 15 gunmen handed over by Israel in a gesture to help President Mahmoud Abbas shore up a ceasefire.

The move gave a modest boost to Abbas as he tries to nudge militants, now observing an informal pause in fighting Israel, into a formal ceasefire in keeping with a declaration he made at a Feb. 8 summit with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Militant chiefs hailed the gesture as a "step in the right direction" but demanded Israel do much more—above all, free thousands of security prisoners and pull back forces on occupied land—as their price for an official truce.

But officials warned a withdrawal from the West Bank town of Jericho might be delayed by several days after a disagreement between the sides over security arrangements. Senior officials from both sides would hold more talks to resolve the matter.

Brief outbursts of violence on Monday showed how tenuous the calm crucial to hopes of talks on a US-devised Middle East "road map" peace plan remains on the ground.

Israeli troops shot dead a knife-wielding Palestinian in the West Bank and militants fired a mortar round into an Army post in southern Gaza, causing no casualties.

But the shooting did not disrupt a process of post-summit goodwill gestures typified by the return of bodies to popular acclaim in Gaza which is to be followed by prisoner releases and Israeli army pullbacks expected to start later this week.

Palestinians thronged roadsides and stood on roofs and balconies to cheer a convoy of 15 ambulances garlanded with flowers transporting the remains from Gaza's Erez border crossing to the militants' home towns for public funerals. *Reuters*

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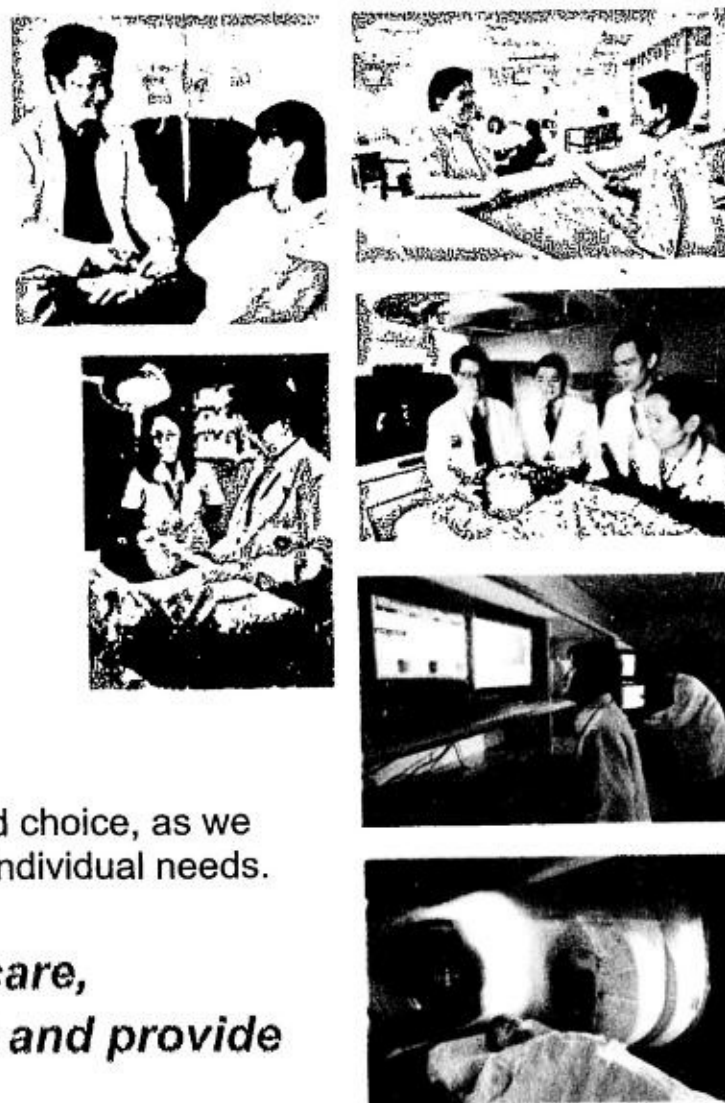
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The way of terrorists

BY MAKING common cause with a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front loyal to Nur Misuari, the Abu Sayyaf apparently sought to gain recognition and support, if not respectability, as a revolutionary group among Muslim Filipinos. Since last week, the bandit group, which achieved international notoriety by boldly raiding plush resorts and kidnapping foreign tourists and Filipinos and beheading some of the hostages, has been fighting alongside a so-called MNLF breakaway group against government troops. The group said it was fighting to obtain justice for the killing of a couple and their 14-year-old boy.

As the fighting escalated and civilians were forced to flee their homes, several local leaders called on the government to declare a ceasefire and start negotiating with the group. Such a call would have been unthinkable just a few weeks back. Until the Abu Sayyaf joined forces with the MNLF faction, there was nothing in its past that would allow it to claim any revolutionary credentials, except its own rhetoric. With its long record of kidnappings, beheadings, torture and bombings, the group was considered widely as nothing more than a greedy and bloodthirsty bunch of criminals. After 9/11, the governments of both the Philippines and the United States classified it as a terrorist organization, and few people disagreed.

The fighting in Sulu put the Abu Sayyaf in a new light. By painting it as a fight for justice, it seemed to be well on the way to winning the sympathy and respect of moderate Muslim leaders in the south, who urged the government to stop its attacks on the combined Abu Sayyaf-MNLF forces.

The series of bombings last Monday, however, has blown to pieces any political gains the Abu Sayyaf may have achieved from its alliance with a faction of the MNLF. The blasts that left 11 people dead in General Santos City, Davao and Makati killed its chances of being acknowledged even by Muslims as a group that speaks for them and works for their well-being.

But the Abu Sayyaf leadership is either unaware of this or it has learned to love the sound of bombs and the sight of blood too much to care. Minutes after the last explosion rocked Makati, its spokesman Abu Solayman gloated in a statement he read over a radio station that the bombings were their "Valentine gift to Gloria," in reference to President Macapagal-Arroyo. "We will find more ways to inflict damage," he warned the Filipino people. "Grieve and mourn your dead. We will make no distinction between civilians (and soldiers)."

That is the way of terrorists, of course, and the Abu Sayyaf has time and again practiced what it preached, grabbing women and schoolchildren, torturing and killing preachers and foreign tourists, bombing ports and passenger boats. Even that reference to gifting the President with dead bodies was a mere rehash of what it said after beheading the American hostage, Guillermo Sobero, four years ago.

Obviously the Abu Sayyaf has never changed its ideology of violence and terror. What is rather surprising is that some other groups would think otherwise. Now that it has again shown its true colors, the Abu Sayyaf has alienated the people of Mindanao who have grown weary of the war as well as the Muslims who have come to resent the use of their religion as an excuse for bringing death and injury to so many innocent people.

Will to end violence

A PEACE treaty is hardly expected soon. The difficult issues—those about the right of the refugees to return, about Jerusalem's status and about the settlements—are being postponed. And these are issues that have led to many collapsed negotiation efforts. What's so remarkable is that Sharon and Abbas met, that there is a mutual will to break the spiral of violence.

Evidently, the main responsibility lies with the parties. But the world has a central role, not the least of which is the United States.

FOREIGN COMMENT The recent visit in the region by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was proof as good as any of a new activity on the part of the Bush administration. And that is an activity that is needed—otherwise the process that is now taking off risks being historical before it has started in earnest. *Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm, Sweden)*



Bombs and love songs for Valentine's

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



THERE were many Valentine's Day shows last Monday, but I'm glad I chose "Love Songs at the Front Page" at the 21-day-old piano bar that is the new watering hole for journalists. There, a combination of veteran and relatively new singers took turns entertaining the crowd with old favorites on the joys and pain of love.

The veterans were pop icon Nonoy Zuñiga, M.D., the doctor who reportedly sings to his patients to hasten healing; Girl Valencia, the favorite singer of National Artist Nick Joaquin when he was still alive; and Edgar Orpida, the "Elvis Presley of Asia." The relative newcomers are Juan Rodrigo, a pioneer of telenovelas long before imported telenovelas flooded the country, who has now turned singer, and, in the most pleasant surprise of all, Marri Nallos, a beautiful 20-year-old from London who is a contestant in "European Idol," which has been imitated by the United States as "American Idol." Well, she is not really a newcomer because Marri just had an album of love songs released by Universal Records, "Ikaw Pa Rin Ang Mamahalin." She was the featured singer of Front Page while the others were guests.

You may have heard of Marri only recently, but she is really a veteran and very accomplished singer. So you would know more about her, let me cite her pedigree:

Although she was born in Rome and grew up in London, Marri is a full-blooded Filipino. And although still very young, she already has had a long experience in music and theater. She was a scholar of the Sylvia Young Theatre School in Marlybone, London, and a graduate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, with a bronze medal to her name. She started singing when she was only 9 years old at their own restaurant in Central London after winning the grand prize in an amateur contest in Le Palais, London. At age 12, she was picked from over 20,000 children in Great Britain to be the "Most Talented Child," a nationwide talent search in Great Britain.

While studying in London, she had memorable appearances in the theater like Young Stars in Sadler's Wells Theatre and the musical "Oliver" in London's Palladium. She also did television shows over BBC-London.

Here, in the Philippines, she finished her first album tour which included 10 malls and five bars/music lounges last April. She started her music lounge act at the Calesa Bar and had gigs with her own band, Friends Inc., in other five-star hotels.

Marri, dressed in a green low-necked seethrough with sequins, opened the show with a series of love songs, ending with "The Way You Look Tonight." Then she introduced Juan Rodrigo who sang the Spanish song "Amor, Amor, Amor" and followed it up with a medley of Broadway musicals. Then he and Marri sang a duet, "You Are My Destiny."

Girl Valencia, the girl with the svelte voice, sang a series of three interconnected love songs: "I'm In the Mood for Love," "The Nearness of You," and the Pilita Corrales standard, "Saan Ka Man Naroroon."

In a well-applauded number, Girl sang a duet with Marri, "I Will Always Love You" that almost brought the house down.

Elvis Presley has many imitators, both here and abroad, and there are always contests for Elvis Presley look-alikes. Recently, there was another such contest in Tokyo and our very own Edgar Orpida won over the other contestants from the region as the "Elvis Presley of Asia." (Chito Bertol of the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation is the first "Elvis Presley of

the Philippines.")

In the signature Elvis costume of white tight-fitting, high-collared togs with sequin embroidery open in front down to the navel, sunglasses, complete with pasted sideburns and many big-stoned rings on his fingers, Edgar sang three Presley favorites that made the audience yell for more. For an encore, he sang a duet with Marri, "When I Fall In Love," a rare occurrence as Elvis rarely sang a duet with anybody.

After that, the audience practically went crazy in love with Marri again when she sang "Crazy." Mark my word, this girl will be tomorrow's super singer.

Then came the pop icon himself all in black, Nonoy Zuñiga, the doctor with the cool, baritone that sends females swooning. He sang two songs from his newest album, released on Valentine's Day by Viva Records, one of which is the sentimental favorite, "Moon River."

For a finale, the group together sang "The Greatest Love of All" with hardly any rehearsal beforehand. This is the trademark of professional singers: they can sing duets, trios and in big groups with hardly any rehearsal.

The show was put together on short notice by talent managers Nelia Lim and Peter Sing, to whom I am grateful. Many journalists called, asking that the show be delayed so they could catch it as they were still busy changing their own front pages to report the series of bomb explosions that killed seven and injured scores of others in Makati, Davao and General Santos, the Valentine's Day gift of terrorists to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But we couldn't delay it too much, as the audience had been waiting since 8 p.m. So, we decided to make it a regular show of Front Page with different outstanding talents performing and to have it televised so more people can see it.

Make it a habit to drop by the Front Page. You never know whom you'll see there.

St. Valentine's Day massacre

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



THE IMAGES were grim and struck a contrast with the cheerfulness of the world. Throughout the day last Monday, all you heard on radio, saw on TV, and read in the newspapers were messages of love. The front pages carried pictures of the kiss-fest that had taken place at the Manila Bay area and other places in the country, Mayor Lito Atienza and wife at the head of them. The TV talk shows during the weekend were all about love, and even HBO and the other movie channels featured movies about love.

At the end of the day, all you saw were images of death.

The one I felt particularly outraged about was the footage of a boy being carried out of the bus terminal in Davao City. You could not see his face because the camera was behind the man who carried him in his arms to a police van. But you could see his legs dangling limply on the side. I do not know if he was the same boy who was reported to have died. I did see the part when ABS-CBN was talking to its Davao correspondent and the guy was getting word that an 11-year-old boy who had been taken bleeding to a hospital had just died. I thought of his parents and felt my blood boil.

More than any other image, that was the one that drove home to me the horror of what had happened. The wreckage of the bus that shattered from an explosion in Makati was grim too, as well as the appearance of those who survived the blast, their heads covered with bandages at the Makati Medical Center. Most of them were not lovers who were going out for a stroll, most of them were folk coming home tired and bedraggled from the day's labors. Those sights were grim, too, but none of them grimmer than that of the legs of a boy sticking out of the side of a man carrying him.

It drove home to me two things in particular. One was the thick veil that language puts before our eyes or minds. The words "war," "retaliation," "bombing," "attrition," "acts of violence," "terrorism," and even "massacre," are dangled before us and somehow the blood and spattered brains are swept away, somehow the screams of terror and cries of grief

and lamentation are muted. That was what filled the newspapers and TV news days before the bombings, and that was what filled the newspapers and TV news after the bombings. Well, war and terrorism and retaliation mean nothing to those who fall in the line of fire and the people who love them. Tell those things to the parents of the kid who died. It's murder, the snuffing of a life, the life of your mother and father, brother and sister, son and daughter. The numbers do not matter, they do not contain the gravity of the deed. A dead boy does.

The second is the truth, often buried in the thicket of war, that it is the innocent rather than the guilty who are the first victims of this stupidity, and that the pursuit of peace, however arduous and however it offends our instinct to lash out or strike back, remains not only the best option but the only one there really is. None of this may justify the escalation of the conflict in Mindanao, which cannot be solved by obliterating the groups that speak for the Muslims. The effort to obliterate them will not obliterate them, it will obliterate the ordinary Muslim folk who, like the rest of us, go home tired and bedraggled from the day's labors. Who, like the rest of us, have children. But which murder now will be hidden from view with the words, "deployment," "containment," preemptive strike." You won't see the limp form of a child dangling from his mother's arms who is beside herself with grief.

The reports say the Abu Sayyaf has owned up to the bombings, claiming they were their Valentine's Day gift to GMA. I take that as a provisional truth, until the Abu Sayyaf or the MILF or any other Muslim organization denies

it or is able to disprove it. That may be the Abu Sayyaf's idea of humor, but it is not so the rest of the world's. I was tempted to say the civilized world's, but that is not so at all, it is the entire human species. It is an obscenity, one that betrays all that we hold to be human. If the Abu Sayyaf did this, then they should be punished harshly, as their crime befits, not just by the government but by their Muslim brethren as well. They have wronged everyone, including those whose cause they presume to advance.

They have not weakened Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, they have strengthened her. They have justified her own acts of terrorism, done in the name of fighting it, wreaked here and abroad, in Muslim Mindanao and Iraq. They have made everyone forget the corruption in her government, the hypocrisy of her government's token concern for the public, the rottenness of her generals who steal from their own men and send them to their deaths. They have made Filipinos believe all over again in John Wayne, come with the US marines to rescue us from the jaws of death with night-vision and dark intent.

They have not strengthened the Muslim cause, they have weakened it. They have raised an anti-Muslim hysteria in many parts of the country, one that has died down over the years with the patent ability of Christians and Muslims to live peacefully and in a neighborhood way also in many parts of the country. As 9/11 amply shows, terrorism is counterproductive. It does not bring sympathy to the cause it espouses, it brings opprobrium to it. It does not show the cause to be strong, it shows it to be cowardly—or no better than the tyrannical it proposes to end.

They have not protected the Muslim community with the might of truth and principle, they have exposed it to the terrible march of fire and sword. The murder of the children will now truly be hidden by the black veil of fighting terrorism, ending savagery, keeping the peace.

They might as well have bombed their own.

Rice avoids confrontation with Paris students

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



courage, who will not let their dreams be denied." She added, "We care deeply about one another. We respect each other. We are strong."

The speech was not only redolent with platitudes but full of weasel words—hardly material that a handful of students can chew on for substantive discussion about America's predilection for acting unilaterally in foreign affairs, on issues of war and peace, and for brushing aside her allies' view of things, as in the US decision to invade Iraq.

It is not hard to see that her encounter with them proved to be a disappointment to the students, the academic community and the French intellectuals. Rice has good academic credentials; she is a specialist in Russian studies. One of her distinguished predecessors in the National Security Council and the State Department, Dr. Henry Kissinger, was a scholar on Prince Metetrnich and the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), which drew up the balance of power in Europe after the Napoleonic wars. Kissinger belongs to the school of realpolitik in international affairs, in which balance of power is attained by dealing with the political realities as they are. By contrast, Rice conducts US foreign policy under an administration whose diplomacy has been described by academic critics as driven by faith and the goal to change reality according to evangelical zeal recently expressed by President Bush's State of the Nation speech of spreading democracy as a cornerstone of US foreign policy.

It is possible that, in avoiding a head-on intellectual confrontation with the French students,

Rice could have been aware of the May 1968 student rising in Paris that paved the way for the fall from power of President Charles de Gaulle. If De Gaulle, who argued his case very well in his several comebacks to power as a messianic leader could be dislodged by the restive students, there is little chance that Rice could come up on top with the students in an intellectual encounter on their home grounds.

In the mid-1960s, French students were in ferment—at the beginning over reforms in the universities and education, to be fanned along the way by rising prices. The ferment in the streets was further fueled by the peace talks in Paris in early 1960 for the settlement of the Vietnam war. On May 13, the anniversary of De Gaulle's return to power, the trade unions, mainly the leftist unions, called a general strike, shutting down France. The strike fused the workers and the students. The workers wanted the ouster of De Gaulle, and went beyond the students' issues of university reforms. They wanted better working conditions and higher wages.

Then the beleaguered De Gaulle left Paris for a secret trip to the French Army on the Rhine in Germany. When he returned on May 24, looking tired and sounding uncertain, Paris was not the same anymore. Student riots had spread in Paris. A counter-demonstration of more than a million supporters in Paris was to no avail. De Gaulle called for a referendum on his continued stay in power, amid rioting. He lost in the referendum. In a few months, he resigned.

In the fresh reappraisal of American relations with traditional allies in the trans-Atlantic community, especially with France, Washington's biggest mistake would be to downplay the influence of its intellectual community, among them the students, whose minds have to be won by lucid argument, not by intimidation through an awesome display of military might. The Europeans put as much stock on incandescent reasoning as on good food.

Balikbayan

LAST week, I had to pick up my mother from a hotel restaurant, where she said she was going to meet up with a distant cousin, a balikbayan now based in California.

I asked her how long it had been since she last saw him. "Since the end of the war," she answered casually.

So, I eventually met Uncle Lou, still a spry 75. It turned out he'd lived in Manila for a while longer after the war, migrating to the United States in 1955. In the last few years, he'd been coming back to Manila each year, but it was only this time that he looked up my mother.

I listened to him as he updated my mother on news from his end. Then he began asking about my mother's brothers and sisters, naming each and every one of them, and that, I can tell you, was a real feat because my maternal grandfather had so many children I still can't keep track of those uncles and aunts.

Earlier brain drain

Uncle Lou introduced me to his room mate, another balikbayan and a golfing partner. This one was Dr. Paul Luna, a pediatrician who graduated from the University of Santo Tomas and who left the Philippines in 1957. I realized he was part of the earlier brain drain, mainly of physicians and nurses.

Dr. Luna also visits frequently, but he was ebullient telling me about this latest trip where he joined a medical mission to Laguna that treated more than 3,000 people in a few days. The mission had been organized by the Michigan chapter of the Philippine Medical Association (I was amazed to know there were American chapters, and quite heartened to know they still maintained ties to the Philippines).

I told Dr. Luna about the current brain drain, now mainly involving nurses and caregivers, and how medicine was becoming a pre-nursing degree in the Philippines. He was surprised to hear about this new twist to brain drain.

I asked if he'd thought about retiring in the Philippines, and told him about the Philippine Retirement Authority, which helps balikbayan Filipinos and foreigners who want to settle down here in their old age. He hadn't heard about that office, so I think it should think about waging a more active information campaign to get to our balikbayan. (Technically, like Dr. Luna, they would now be considered foreign nationals since they would have become American citizens.)

But as we talked about retirement here, Dr. Luna did pause to think, and explained he had lived in the States longer than in the Philippines and that all his children lived there. I realized "home" for him was the States, but that at least he did think of coming back to the Philippines from time to time, and of serving with medical missions.

Roots

Meeting with Uncle Lou and Dr. Luna got me thinking. In our youth, we're more willing to explore new horizons, new worlds. But as we age, we think more of our roots, going back to ancestral homes, looking up long lost relatives.

Given the Filipino diaspora, that may not always be easy. What and where is home? How do we answer the classic Filipino question, "Taga saan ka (Where are you from)?"

I wonder at times about our claims to having close and enduring family ties. A few years ago while directing an anthropology field school in Bohol, I brought the students to the municipal cemetery and was surprised to find so many abandoned graves, some dating as recently as the 1980s.

The cemetery caretakers explained that the abandoned graves were usually those of relatives of Filipinos who had migrated. Bohol is well known as an out-migration area, and in fairness, I have to say Boholanos are quite conscious about maintaining ties with their hometowns, coming back to visit and donating books, medical supplies and medicines and setting up scholarships.

But we may have to face up to the fact that many Filipinos, once they migrate, will eventually think of America as their home. The idea of retiring in the Philippines is not too attractive, especially if their children live in the States. Some of my older relatives who now live in the States or Canada explain, too, that they feel more secure in North America with the medical system. There, with health insurance and retirement plans, they don't need to worry about their savings being wiped out if they come down with some catastrophic illness.

Left behind

Sadly, it is this precarious life in the Philippines that may also push overseas Filipinos not just to stay abroad but to reduce ties with relatives back home to a minimum, to dodge the never-ending requests for financial assistance, usually associated with illness.

But I hope, too, that overseas Filipinos find ways of helping those left behind in the Philippines. Fr. Rudy Manoloto, a former student of mine who now ministers to a parish in the States, visited recently and I suggested that he appeal to his predominantly Filipino parishioners to be more conscious about relatives in the Philippines. I told him about several elderly Filipinos I know, within our own university community, living quite miserably despite having several children overseas.

Many overseas Filipinos do send monthly checks back to help their families, but tend to centralize the assistance with one relative, who presumably would take care of sharing the bounties. I'd advise our overseas Filipinos to pick that relative with great prudence. I know of families where the "chosen one" squanders the monthly checks on wine, women and song, even as their elderly parents suffer from grievous chronic illnesses.

We are now several decades into the Filipino diaspora, with Filipinos now living in all corners of the world. Their ties to the Philippines vary. Some will come home each year while others have not revisited since they left 20 or 30 years ago. Some left mainly because of economic reasons. Others were political exiles. Still others are "sexual" exiles (I know many lesbians and gay men who left because they could not live with the homophobia here). Still others feel countries in the West actually offer a better environment to raise their children in—how, indeed, does one raise a child to be honest when corruption is so pervasive, from the friendly neighborhood cop to the highest echelons of public office?

There are variations, too, among those who come home, the balikbayan. The classic stereotype is the whiner, endlessly complaining, in an American accent, about how nothing goes right here compared to Mother America. Others silently find ways to help out without being patronizing, sharing hopes that we will come to a time when Filipinos will still think of living and working overseas, but not as a desperate last option.

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Civilians hurt on both 'sides'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



The same TV newscasts that blared the "breaking news" stories of the bombings carried news reports on the plight of the civilians who were forced to flee their homes in the embattled villages of Sulu. Most of the evacuees shown in the footage were women and children. Reporters highlighted the hunger and illness stalking the refugees, what with supplies taking a much longer time to reach the evacuation centers because they had to be transported by boat, with the highways closed due to the fighting.

Even worse than the forced displacement of civilians are reports that military commanders in the region deliberately target civilian communities, in the belief that the MNLF renegade troops are using their neighbors and families as convenient camouflage.

A friend says he wasn't surprised at all by the retaliatory bombings, if that was what they were. "If I were an MNLF sympathizer, I would also be targeting civilians since that is what our military is doing to them," he said.

ANYWAY, there may still be time to break the cycle of retaliation and even escalation in this latest round of conflict. At the very least, our government forces, if they wish to claim the moral high ground, should abandon the policy of targeting civilian populations as soon as possible.

Following that, serious thought should be given to calling a ceasefire on both sides, if only to spare us from any more deaths and destruction.

Last Feb. 9, "concerned citizens" from Sulu and Maguindanao, taking part in a conference on "The Global Campaign against Terror and its Implications on the Peace Process," issued an "ur-

gent appeal" to both the government forces and the MNLF for a ceasefire.

"For several days now, areas of the Sulu province have once again been subjected to massive military operations as government soldiers continued to clash with Misuari supporters," the statement noted. "Initial reports from the field indicate losses on both sides with the number of casualties expected to rise further."

"We strongly condemn this violence and appeal to both sides for an immediate ceasefire."

"Amid conflicting claims by both the military and the MNLF, we also urge the local government and the political leaders in the province to launch an investigation into this issue."

"Lastly, we call for greater vigilance on the part of civil society. Often, in conflict, it is the community that bears the heaviest burden and we urge civil society to be vigilant and champion the community's interests."

AMINA Rasul of the Philippine Council on Islam and Democracy (PCID) and the Muslim Women Peace Advocates, called on Sulu Governor Loong and Jolo Mayor Tan to conduct an investigation on the causes of the outbreak of the fighting, adding that "local government officials in Sulu should help resolve the crisis through constructive dialogue."

Rasul said an investigation is in order to dispel speculations as to what really caused the fighting. The woman peace advocate said that the first thing that both sides, the military and the MNLF, should do is to put down their arms and allow local Muslim leaders in Sulu and Mindanao to help patch up their differences. "Both sides must always remember that it is the people of Sulu who are most affected by this conflict. As efforts are being made in the area of peace and development in Mindanao, it is unfortunate that this fighting should occur at this time," she said.

Today, thanks to the bombings, the bloodshed, fear and insecurity have gone beyond Sulu's borders. What was once a conflict confined to Sulu is now a national problem.

Two letters to Rizal

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



woman looks like she is hanging on a noose, hence Rizal is looking at his future, when he would die for love of his country.

Valentine's and romantic love was a column topic playing in my mind last Monday, until I was rudely interrupted by the bombing of the bus on Edsa. It's difficult to write about love in the past in the face of such senseless violence, but then half the column was already written by Josephine Bracken in two letters to Rizal written in August 1896.

Rizal requested some things to be brought to him as he waited, bored and understandably irritable, aboard a prison ship off Manila Bay. He requested his sisters or Josephine Bracken to bring an assortment of articles that included clothes, detachable collars and cuffs, mangoes, cheese (surely *kesong puti*) lanzones, terrine, and foie gras. Having been exiled in Dapitan for four years, he craved for certain foods. Bracken wrote him on Aug. 13, 1896 and apologized because she forgot to send his pants and waistcoat. Then she complained:

"Ah, my dear I am suffering a great deal with them in Trozo [where the Rizal family maintained a home after being evicted from Calamba], it is quite true they ought to be ashamed of me as they say in my face & in the Presence of Sra. Narcisa & their children because I am not married to you. So if you hear that I don't go to Trozo any more don't be surprised..."

The grammatical and spelling mistakes are so evident in her letter that the editor of a compilation of Rizal's correspondence could not resist a

seemingly objective but snide remark: "It is evident Miss Bracken does not write grammatical English."

Bracken had first lodged with the Rizal family in Trozo, but later moved to the home of Rizal's sister Soledad who was estranged from the family because she married a man they did not approve of. Misery does love company. But by staying with Soledad, she did not endeavor herself to her once and future in-laws. Depressed at this point, Bracken tried to break off with Rizal thus:

"If you go to Spain you see any one of your fancy you better marry her, but dear hear me better marry than to live like who we have been doing. I am not ashamed to let people know my life with you but as your dear Sisters are ashamed I think you had better get married to some one else..."

Four days later, on Aug. 17, 1896, she was in better spirits. She wanted to visit Rizal alone, without members of his family, so they could talk and they could "be very free to each other." She bade Rizal goodbye:

"...I am always sorry thinking of you. Oh! Dear how I miss you. I will always be good & faithful to you, and also do good to my companions so that the good God will bring you back to me. I will try all my best to be good to your family especially to your dear old Parents...How it made the tears flew in my eyes when I read those few lines of you. Say darling say it makes me think of our dear old hut in Dapitan and the many sweet ours we have passed there."

"Love I will love you ever, love I will leave thee never, ever to me precious to thee never to part heart bound to heart or never to say good bye. So my darling receive many warm Affection and love. From your ever faithful and true till death Josephine Bracken."

Rizal's written replies to the above are not extant, though we can presume that they did get to talk and settle things heart to heart.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice deflected a confrontation with French university students in Paris during her whirlwind charm offensive in Europe last week, in what was to have been a test of her mettle as a diplomat able to talk on her feet and tackle unscripted situations.

Describing her first foray into the French intellectual arena, the Washington Post reported that Rice stepped into the elite Institute d'Etudes Politiques to face questions about the rebuilding of the damaged European-American relations. According to the report, a State Department official had asked the school to vet five people/questions. In the forum, Rice took just five questions.

"Like the questions, access to the hall was controlled," the Post reported. "Of 500 seats, only 150 went to the school's students and staff. Another 150 were given to French opinion leaders and government officials." Fifty went to American organizations, etc. "Meanwhile, scores of students from the school were kept well away from the session. Several complained of being pushed back by police."

As a result, the students and the school's staff were under-represented, compared with the over-representation from the official clique and US Embassy staff. The format of the forum was a transplant of press conferences in the State Department and in the White House, where the secretary of state and President George W. Bush normally face the accredited press. Through this system, the exchange is restricted between officials and the press. This arrangement facilitates news management through which it is not unusual for questions to be planted to friendly journalists and to be asked, without catching the officials off-balance.

This format does not allow inter-disciplinary cross-fertilization of questions. The Paris forum provided a venue for an exchange in which Rice could have been grilled on subjects she did not prepare for. What amounted to an "interaction" with the French students took off from her speech in which she said, "History is made by men and women of conviction, of commitment and of

QUITE a common reaction to what newspapers quite luridly described as the "Valentine's Day Massacre" was: "How could those bombers have targeted innocent civilians?" Others condemned what appeared like deliberate planning and timing to hurt or kill as many people as possible, with the blasts set to go off at the height of commuting hours and with many more people than usual staying out on the streets to celebrate the Day of Hearts.

This perception was only bolstered by the statement of the group claiming responsibility for the bombings that the mayhem and bloodshed was its "Valentine's gift to GMA."

We didn't have to look far for the culprit. Too many Filipinos, it seemed, were only too willing to go along with the police and military theory that the bombings in Makati, GenSan and Davao were the handiwork of "Muslim terrorists" perpetrated as revenge against the government and Christians in general for the ongoing military action in Sulu. The blame-laying fit right in with the built-in hostility to Muslims or Moros that lies just below the surface of our supposedly Christian society.

The mother of one of the Marines killed in recent clashes in the South expressed this sentiment quite bluntly when, asked what she wanted to happen to her son's "killers," she replied tearfully: "My heart is overflowing with hatred for them. I want them crushed!"

Of course, it's quite possible, and indeed probable, that the bombings were planned by terrorists fueled by an emergent Islamist movement with Jemaah Islamiyah at its lead. Then again, given that all we have to go on is theory, some whole other groups may be behind it. Some even suggest that the "Valentine's massacre" may be but part of a script we are all familiar with, a prelude to martial law.

WHAT strikes me as funny, or ironic, in this situation, though is how we Christians can be so quick to decry the targeting of "innocent civilians" by terrorists (when they are terrorists precisely because they target civilians), but are quite reluctant to condemn the involvement of civilians in the current military operations in Sulu and in Maguindanao before this.

LAST Monday, Valentine's Day, I decided to walk around Glorietta and watch the happy couples go by. It was best to spend the evening away from traffic choke points in Pasay, Mandaluyong, Caloocan and Sta. Mesa where we have the heaviest concentration of motels. Aside from brisk sales in roses and chocolates, there must have been a big turnover in restaurants, motels and hotels that night. Everything seemed normal until 6.45 p.m., when I noticed people crowding down the escalators. There was no stampede, nothing was amiss except for establishments whose excited staff literally closed shop before 9 p.m.

When I inquired, I was calmly told that this volume of people was normal when a movie finished on the fourth floor. However, people I saw didn't look like he had come from a nice movie; everyone had his cell phone glued to his ears. Catching the fear in their faces, I just followed the flow like a lemming.

On the ground floor, I caught the scent of gunpowder. Outside, white smoke was being blown in our direction from the MRT station on Edsa beside the Intercon. It was useless to get in the car and add to the traffic, so I found a restaurant and ordered dimsum.

Munching on chicken feet steamed in *tausi*, I discreetly watched a man stare blindly at the cold food on a table set for two. His date was late.

The scene reminded me of the woman in Juan Luna's controversial painting "Parian Life." She waited for her date to return to the table as three Pinoy patriots—Jose Rizal, Juan Luna and Ariston Baustista—sat at the next table and examined her with X-ray vision, making her conscious and nervous. It is an ordinary painting that results in a number of interpretations, one fantastic reading being that if you look at the silhouette of the lady with her splayed legs, it resembles the outline of a map of the Philippines. Hence, the three leering men on the side are actually looking at their motherland, Filipinas, with homesick longing in a Parian café. Another way of seeing is that the

Adamson's Jewish professors

IN HIS Jan. 31 column, Manuel L. Quezon III mentioned "Escape to Manila," a book of Frank Ephraim that tells the story of the Jewish refugees who fled to Manila from persecution in Europe. The Jews who were accepted as professors by the sympathetic Greek owners of Adamson University—George Lucas Adamson, George Athos Adamson and Alexander Athos Adamson—around 1939 were part of this group.

In her book "Gods, Angels, Pearls and Roses" (1982), Sophia Adamson, the founding dean of the College of Education and wife of George Athos, narrates: "Another consequence of the war (in Europe) that touched us personally was the acceptance by Adamson University of several Jewish professors, refugees from Germany. Our guarantee of a position to

teach at our university gave them the right to visas to the Philippines so that they could leave Nazi Germany and escape the concentration camps.

"Dr. Oscar Falek was a chemist from the I.G. Farbenindustrie and a professor at the University of Berlin. Dr. Leopold Prasnick was from Budapest and became the head of our Department of Physics and Electrochemistry. Dr. Rosenfeld was an architect from Berlin. Dr. Carlos Sommer was a medical doctor from Vienna who began teaching our classes in German. Dr. Gustave Heilmer was from Frankfurt, and was the last to arrive because he was the chemist who developed the barbiturates that Hitler needed to calm his citizens in the air raid shelters of Germany. They were a remarkable group of men, and to know that

they were spared, and their families with them, from the horrors of Hitler's oppression of the Jews made us feel very grateful, and we developed a special bond for them."

As a pioneering school of industrial chemistry founded in 1932, Adamson University greatly benefited from the knowledge, expertise and experience of these Jewish professors who definitely contributed to its establishment as a premiere chemistry school. But we owe it ultimately to people like former Sen. Quintin Paredes, whose advocacy to welcome Jewish refugees to the Philippines, as Quezon stated in his column, started everything.

—RAUL AGNER,
Adamson University Archives,
Adamson University,
900 San Marcelino St., Manila

Irresponsible senator

I HAVE always admired Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago since her college days in the University of the Philippines. Through the many years that I have followed her career as a public official, I have been awed by her brilliance, witicism and courageous conviction.

But I was extremely dismayed to know that she included me in the list of governors who are allegedly coddling illegal loggers, without first conducting an investigation as to the state of our forests in Surigao del Sur.

How could she make such a irresponsible statement?

I now realize that the senator has the maniacal tendency to get publicity mileage at the expense of other people. No illegal logging of massive proportions exists in my province. The only illegal log-

gers in my turf are the jobless upland *kaingineros* and "chain-saw cutters" who are forced to go against the law because of their dire need to earn a living so that they can survive.

Picop Resources Inc., which was mentioned as a logging company that allegedly engages in illegal logging, is far from guilty of Santiago's malicious imputations. Neither are the other logging companies here, which include Sudecor and Artimco.

The above-mentioned logging companies, which have a combined concession area of about 70 percent of our forest cover, are very responsible concessionaires. They reforest and see to it that our forests are not indiscriminately logged.

Because of their good forest management, Surigao del Sur, for

more than 50 years now, continues to be acknowledged as the province with the largest forest cover.

I really feel aggrieved that in spite of my efforts to maintain our lush and green forest, Santiago accused me of being a coddler of illegal loggers.

This country does not deserve an irresponsible lawmaker who is quick to accuse well-meaning people of misdeeds but who is slow in examining her own deficiencies.

I will dish out to Santiago a dose of her own medicine. I will urge the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Surigao del Sur to declare her *persona non grata* in our province.

—VICENTE T. PIMENTEL JR.,
provincial governor,
Surigao del Sur

World-class professionals

I BEG to disagree with INQUIRER columnist Conrado de Quiros on his view that if the point is landing a job abroad, then the four or five years spent in college and universities is just as well a waste of time and effort. (PDI, 1/31/05)

His claim that you won't be working as a doctor, lawyer or media person in other countries as they won't take you in those capacities has no basis in truth and in fact. De Quiros should have first checked his facts and figures before coming out with such sweeping allegations.

Most of the leading hospitals here in the Middle East have Filipino doctors and nurses as their prized employees. A number of these medical staff are even hired in Europe. A number of the local English dailies here also have Filipino staff as journalists. I, for one, work as the corporate and legal consultant of a conglomerate engaged in the exploration and production of oil and petroleum here, while two of my lawyer friends are in Brazil and another one is in China.

And for De Quiros' further information, I took my pre-law at the Technological Institute of the Philippines, while my two lawyer-friends took their pre-law at the Philippine College of Criminology. What quality of education at Ateneo and La Salle then is De Quiros talking about?

It's high time to stop downgrading ourselves. Filipino professionals are world-class. It is just a matter of letting the world know about it.

—AVELINO U. FALCON,
Saudi Aramco Gulf Operations,
PO Box 256, Khafji 31971,
Saudi Arabia

Special exam but not special treatment

REGARDING the column titled "Unqualified" by Solita Monsod (PDI, 2/12/05), please allow me to present my side.

It is true that former acting Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez took the Management Aptitude Test Battery (MATB), the first step of a four-stage process to acquire a Career Executive Service Eligibility (CESE), alone. It was in January 2003, shortly after he was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as public works undersecretary. At that time, the Career Executive Service Board (CESB) had no policy limiting the conduct of the MATB from February to December. Allowing an individual to take the examination alone was then an accepted practice dating back to the days prior to my tenure as executive director.

Soriquez was not an isolated case. Before and after him, there were other applicants—including CSC directors and PNP officers—who were allowed to take the MATB all by their lonesome. My predecessor can attest to this. We called this practice "special" examination. In fact, one of the members of the CESB, upon his request, took the MATB under that setup. He is now a career executive service officer.

Thus, when Soriquez took the MATB, no written policy or rule was violated; there was no valid ground for me to deny Soriquez of his request; and my husband being with the DPWH had nothing to do with it. Office records will bear this out.

Secondly, the actual adminis-

tration of the MATB is given to the technical staff. Admittedly, when Soriquez took the exam, we were not yet particular on the matter of bringing cell phones into the examination room. At times, it was even allowed for those who had no calculators.

I came to know about his having with him several cell phones when he took the exam only after questions were raised about his examination. This was a year after. Besides, it was unlikely that he could have called outside for help without the examiner hearing him. And texting the questions, which is time-consuming, would have been too impractical. Everybody knows the time constraint in an exam. We have since realized that a no-cell phone policy during examinations is good for the system.

Thirdly, the allegation that I had the results of Soriquez's exams hand-carried to him on the same day as the exam is bereft of any factual basis and is, therefore, unfair and unkind. I gave no such instructions. Soriquez's papers went through the normal process. The exam results during my time were sent by mail, although examinees were allowed to pick them up in person or through representatives.

It has been a year since I resigned, but not because of Soriquez's case.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to present my side.

—NORMITA L. VILLANUEVA,
former executive director,
Career Executive Service Board

Church deals with matters of faith

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's firm stand on the population issue, despite an appeal from the country's leading businessmen, is commendable. It is about time for all Christian families to rally behind her and adopt a policy based on responsible parenthood.

The President's stand respecting the right to life echoes the Pope's "Evangelium Vitae," which states that "only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace."

Business leaders warn that rapid population growth, if not addressed, would make feeding and educating the 18 million Filipinos born every year a heavy burden for the country.

Julian Simon, a population adviser of US President Ronald Reagan, gives us this eye opener: "Further growth in population creates opportunities and markets. It means more young people working; above all, it will augment our deposit of useful knowledge... Eco-

nomically speaking, minds are as important—perhaps more important than hands and mouth... The principal fuel to accelerate world progress is our deposit of human wisdom; our best resource is people—people who are well-trained, courageous and hopeful, exercising their imagination and their will to provide for themselves and their families, and thus benefiting all."

A demographer at Harvard's Center for Population Studies, Nick Eberstadt, shares the same belief: "If population means more mouths to feed, then it also means more hands to work. If it means more demands on economy, then it also means growing market. If it means straining the ability of the earth to produce natural resources, then it also opens up opportunities for resource-saving and productivity-increasing innovations."

The President is on the right track in refusing to yield to the demands and pressures of the business sector.

—BUENA A. CARPENA,
Laguna

Can't be wrong on contraception

THIS is in relation to the letter titled "Wrong on Galileo, wrong on population." (PDI, 1/18/05)

Only matters of faith are decreed by the Church for belief by its faithful. Overpopulation is not such a matter. The CBCP Guiding Principles on Population Control signed by Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi (when he was president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 1990) says in point No. 9 that: "The increase or decrease of population growth does not by itself spell development or underdevelopment. The Church does not forbid the advocacy of the acceleration or deceleration of our population growth, according to the circumstances, provided this is achieved within the parameters of freedom of conscience, the responsible decision of couples, and the principles of sexual and family morality."

The bone of contention is contraception. The Church indeed preaches about it because it is a matter of morals.

The allegation is that the Church is wrong about contraception's sinfulness because it was mistaken about Galileo. The Church might have been discredited by Galileo's having been proven right. But on closer look, the Church is not an institution set out to make discoveries of science. Its turf is faith and morals. And that is where it enjoys infallibility, not on matters of science.

Why then did the Church make a pronouncement on Galileo? That was because he said something about the faith and the inter-

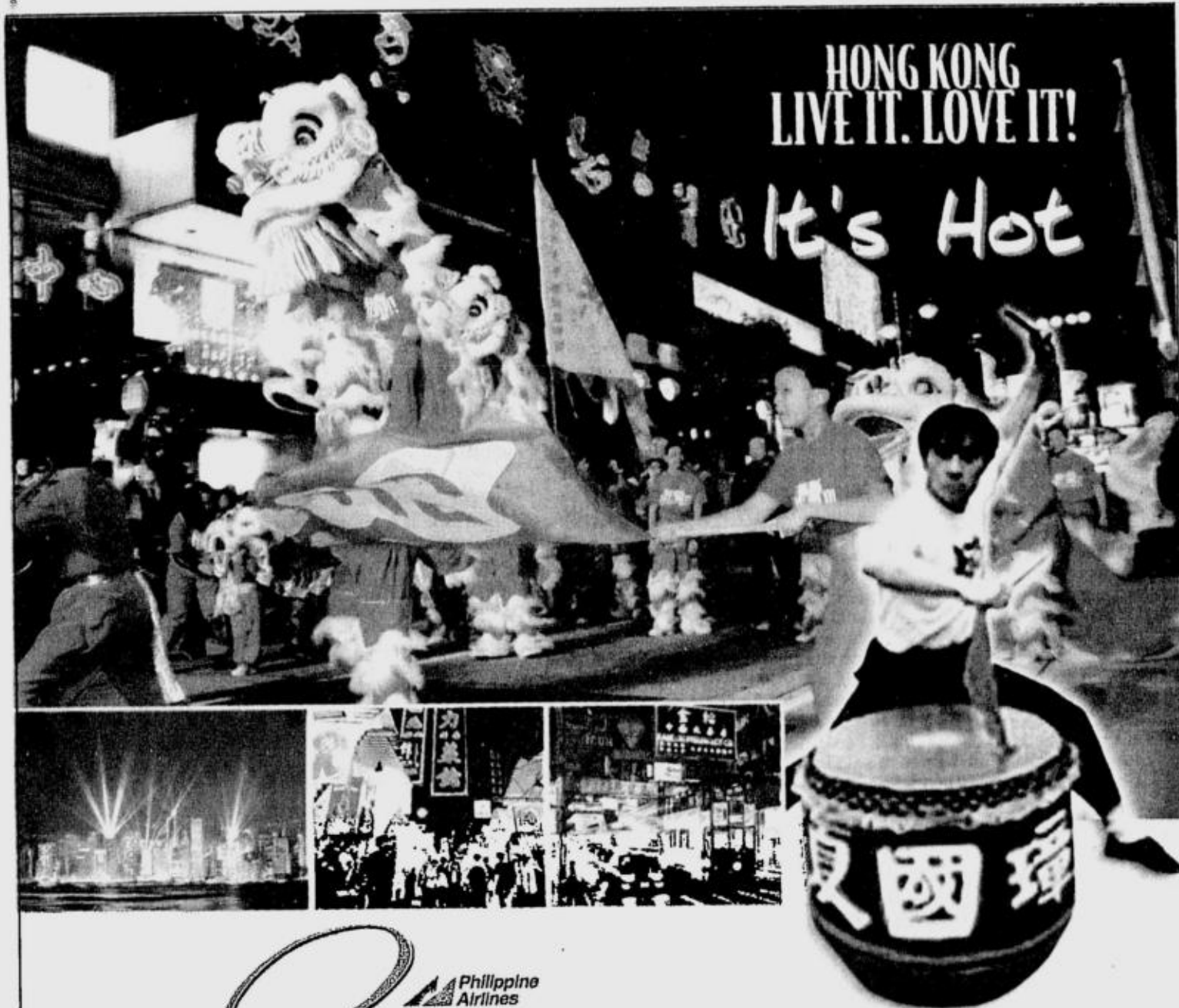
pretation of Sacred Scriptures. Not because he espoused heliocentrism. (In fact, Nicolaus Copernicus asserted that before him. He even explained it to Pope Paul III who did not condemn him for that.) The Church merely intended to protect the Sacred Scriptures from being misinterpreted by Galileo's tentative scientific assertions. I say tentative because even he could not prove beyond reasonable doubt what he avowed.

Science at that time was not equipped to demonstrate it. Strictly speaking, his was only a theory. However, he went beyond scientific bounds in contending it as truth. We must keep in mind that it was not only the Church that held up geocentrism. It was the prevailing conviction of the time.

Was the Church's judgment supposed to be infallible? No, because the Church's infallibility is set on three conditions, namely: that the Pope must speak officially as Supreme Shepherd of the Church, he must speak on faith or morals, and he must clearly define the declaration he makes as one to be held by all the faithful.

But contraception is a moral matter and the catechism of the Church affirms that it is intrinsically evil. The Church may have been wrong in disciplining Galileo but it cannot be wrong about contraception.

—CHING SANSON,
76 Grants St.,
GSIS Village,
Barangay Sangandaan,
Project 8, Quezon City



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Air Force men kill 3 NPA guerrillas

CALAMBA CITY—A day after the communist-led New People's Army owned up to the killing of four policemen in an ambush in Virac, Catanduanes, government troops got back at the communist rebels, killing three alleged guerrillas and capturing two others in an operation yesterday in a mountainous village in Calatagan, Batangas.

Col. Jaime Buenaflor, chief of the 202nd Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army, said a platoon of the 730th Combat Wing of the Philippine Air Force, led by a certain Capt. Del Tiarro, received information from a resident that an armed group was sighted in

Barangays Baha and Hukay at the foot of Mt. San Pedrino.

Buenaflor told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview that as the government troops were approaching the area at around 8:25 a.m., the suspected rebels fired at them.

He said the gun battle lasted for an hour until the rebels, numbering about 20, retreated to the mountains.

As the soldiers were clearing the area, they found the bodies of a middle-aged woman and two men armed with high-powered firearms, Buenaflor said.

Two men, he said, voluntarily surrendered also during the clearing operations. They are now undergoing tactical interrogation in the custody of PAF personnel.

He said they believe most of the

rebels were wounded as shown by blood stains in the area.

No casualties were reported on the government side, Buenaflor said.

Recovered from the three were backpacks containing communist documents, an M-14 rifle and two M-16 Armalite rifles.

Buenaflor said the encounter was "a major triumph" for the government as it involved alleged NPA officials from nearby Mindoro province.

He said they were still scouring

the area using dogs from their K9 units.

He said they also coordinated with the local police to check wounded persons brought to hospitals in the provinces of Batangas and Cavite.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, confirmed that they lost some of their members in the encounter.

He, however, said only two of the fatalities were members of the NPA.

He identified the two as a certain Ka Mildred and Ka Zoreri. Both were members of the NPA's Edgardo Dagli Command based in Batangas.

Rosal dismissed Buenaflor's claims that many of the rebels who retreated were wounded and described it as "mere propaganda."

He likewise denied that the two captured men were NPA rebels. He said the two "were in fact residents of the area." **Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

Attack on rebel leader kills son, 3 others in Arayat

ARAYAT, Pampanga—Residents here anticipate a fresh spate of violence following Monday's ambush in Mexico town that wounded Emmanuel "Von" Alejandrino, the last commander of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan, and killed his son and three other companions.

Vengeance, the residents believed, was likely since Alejandrino's son, Vladimir, 24, was the HMB commander's favorite child.

Although Alejandrino, 57, was reportedly keeping a low profile in the armed wing of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas since he ran and lost for mayor here in May 2004, residents said his brother Dindo continued to command the Rebolusyonaryong Sandatahang Anak Pawis.

Their uncle, Casto, still influences the old PKP whose military department he used to lead.

Mayor Chito Espino said the police have been placed on alert for what may be a looming war of attrition.

Also killed in the ambush were two men known only by their nicknames, Jay and Joseph, and Alejandrino's driver.

Alejandrino suffered from six bullet wounds after he exchanged fire with their attackers who were armed with M-16 rifles.

Alejandrino and his seven companions, all aboard a Kia Besta van, were attacked as they cruised along a road in Barangay Sto. Rosario at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

His wife Madeth, a still unidentified pregnant woman and a certain Rolando Espino ducked for cover, suffering only bruises.

The suspect fled toward Arayat, using another Besta van. Investigators said the van's license plate belonged to an old Toyota sedan.

Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, Pampanga police director, said the police were "investigating all possible suspects."

Mel Lumbang, of the Rebolusyonaryong Gerilyang Arayat, was included in the list of suspects, police said.

Lumbang surrendered to the military before the May 10, 2004, elections. He was charged with masterminding the ambush on Mayor Espino in 2002.

A source at the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said Lumbang is an "unlikely suspect" since he and Alejandrino had always been allies. **Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk**

Truck rams store, kills father, son

CEBU CITY—A 53-year-old man and his young son were killed yesterday when a 10-wheel truck rammed into his sari-sari store along the national highway in Barangay Pangdan, Naga town, about 21 km south of this city.

Vicente Villena and his son July, 10, died on the spot due to severe injuries in their heads and bodies. His wife Rosa, 43, and granddaughter Kisha, 3, were also hurt and were brought to a hospital in Cebu City.

Truck driver Elandro Trazona, 20 and a resident of Toledo City, and a truck helper identified only as Gilbert suffered minor injuries.

The truck was on its way to Cebu City at about 2 a.m. when it rammed into the store where the Villena family was fast asleep.

Laila Aliganga, a relative of the victims, said the Villena family usually spent the night at the store even if they had a house located several meters away.

She said the store was destroyed, indicating that Trazona was driving fast when the accident happened.

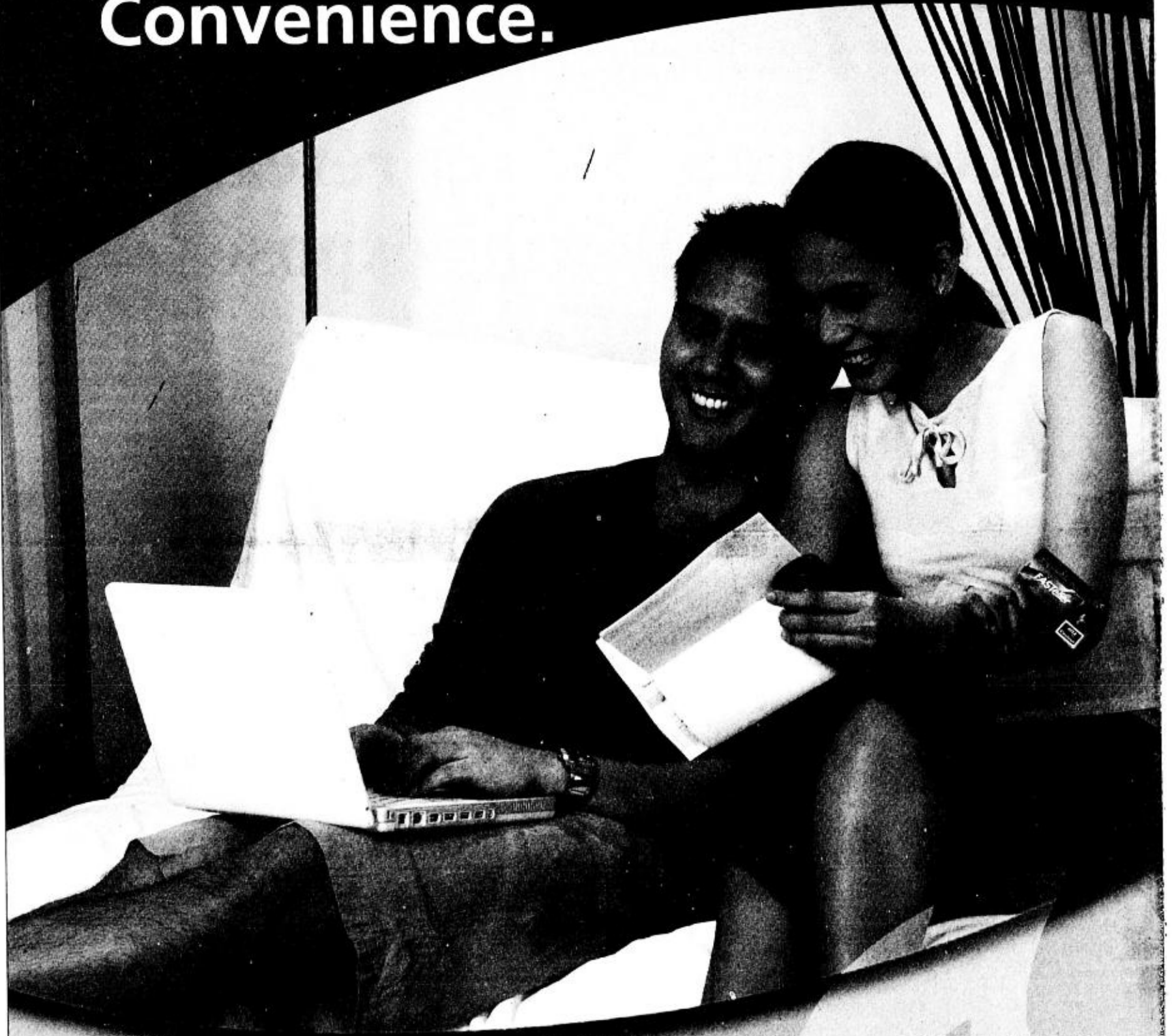
SPO1 Rogelio Rentelosa, Naga police investigator, said charges of reckless imprudence resulting to double homicide would be filed against Trazona.

Trazona was the driver of the Cebu City-based CM Trucking, which was hired to transport sacks of fertilizer from Atlas Fertilizer and Chemicals Inc. in Sangi Beach, Toledo City, about 50 km west of here, to Y and C Corporation in Barangay Mabolo, Cebu City.

Trazona admitted he fell asleep while driving because he was tired after he and his helper loaded about 450 sacks of fertilizer into the truck.

He apologized to the relatives of the victims, saying what happened was an accident. **Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau**

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LOVE AFFAIR
Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn leads residents in planting mangroves in a coastal area of the Palawan capital as the city marks its third "Love Affair with Nature" program, a yearly environmental affair coinciding with the celebration of Valentine's Day.

Napocor whistle-blower reveals death threats following exposé

DAGUPAN CITY—A National Power Corp. employee, who accused six company officials of rigging the bidding for a housing project, said he had received death threats and was being harassed by the officials.

Frederick Vergara, an engineer assigned to the San Roque multi-purpose power dam in San Manuel, Pangasinan, earlier filed an administrative case before the Ombudsman against six Napocor officials whom he accused of rigging the bidding for construction materials for the Daynet and Bantic resettlement projects in Itogon, Benguet.

He also accused the officials of issuing payments for hauling of construction materials to fictitious persons.

Vergara said one of his superiors told him to "ask for any favor"

in exchange for the withdrawal of the complaint. But when he refused, they started harassing him, he said.

He said the officials grounded him and gave him a low rating in his job performance contract.

According to Vergara, he was put under police surveillance allegedly for brandishing his gun in office. He denied the accusation.

He said he was advised to be cautious because a local official, who had pending contracts with Napocor, could not be paid because of the case Vergara filed before the Ombudsman.

In his complaint on Nov. 9, 2004, Vergara sued his superiors for violation of the antigraft and corrupt practices law, falsification of public documents,

abuse of authority and grave threats.

They are Katambayan Celino Sr., Ronald Perez, Bernardino Abellera Jr., Richard Rebong, Almorio Retulal and Emerito Quimosing Sr.

But the officials denied Vergara's allegations, saying these were "false, unfounded and malicious."

They filed separate countercharges against Vergara and accused him of perjury for executing an oath "containing untruthful statements on material matters" and libel.

They also blamed Vergara for the delay in the construction of houses for the Bantic resettlement project in Itogon "because of his false and malicious accusations that prevented workers [from working] due to nonpayment of their salaries."

"Vergara (has) to twist the facts and make untruthful statements to support his false and baseless accusations," they said.

Vergara, as official canvasser of the procurement committee, said he distributed bid forms to two prospective suppliers.

But he said Quimosing told him that Perez had committed the project to another supplier. When the bids were opened and evaluated, it turned out that the contract to supply all items (about 100 construction materials) were won by a single bidder, "something that was improbable," Vergara said.

He reported the "anomalous bidding procedure" to Retulal, chair of the bidding committee, "but he (Retulal) ignored it."

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Daughter of German murdered in Boracay seeks swift justice

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Frustrated by the investigation of her father's case, the daughter of a German killed on Boracay Island in Aklan last year will ask the help of the German government in finding justice.

Marjam Forstenhausler-Sheldon, 43, said she would ask the German government to urge Philippine authorities to speed up the case.

Sheldon is the only child of Anton Forstenhausler with his former wife Lilo.

The couple separated in the 1970s. In 1996, Forstenhausler married Josephine Elamparo, a Filipina based in Manila.

Forstenhausler, his guests, Swiss-born vineyard owner Manfred Schoeni and Hong Kong-based architect John James Cowperthwaite, and his Filipino maid Erna Sarmiento, were found dead on May 3, 2004, at his three-story mansion called Dolce Vita, on Mt. Luho at Sitio Bulabog in Barangay Balabag. The victims bore multiple stab wounds.

the second floor of the mansion where the bodies of the three foreigners were found. The specimens matched those of Friesl.

But Friesl, 38 and a mechanic, strongly denied the accusation that he had a hand in the killings.

In his counter-affidavit, he claimed that his fingerprints were there because the police asked him to help identify the victims shortly after the bodies were found.

No update

Sheldon said she was disappointed with the failure of the police to update her on the progress of the case.

"I have been sending e-mails and fax messages but they (police) have not replied. I get information on the case only from newspapers," she said.

"In Europe, it is simply unthinkable that the families are not informed of what's happening with the case. They have no respect for the (victims) and their families and justice not being done," Sheldon added.

But Chief Supt. George Aliño, Western Visayas police chief, said they had replied to Sheldon's queries.

He said they could not arrest Friesl earlier because the arrest warrant only came out last month.

Aliño said they are confident that they will arrest Friesl because a team from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group has been tracking the accused.

Sheldon was also disappointed why the offer of the German government to help in the case through the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), the central police agency in Germany, was refused.

A team from the BKA offered assistance in conducting forensic examinations and DNA testing on the many pieces of evidence recovered from the crime scene.

Appalled

She said she was "appalled" that Uwe Friesl remained at large despite the issuance of an arrest warrant last month.

"Obviously, (Uwe) is hiding because the police can't find him, but I can't understand why they have not arrested him until now," Sheldon told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview from her home in London.

In a resolution dated Jan. 5, the Aklan Provincial Prosecutor's Office charged Friesl and three unidentified suspects with four counts of murder for the killings. The Aklan Regional Trial Court Branch 6 has issued a warrant for Friesl's arrest.

Friesl was indicted based mainly on a set of footprint specimens taken near the lavatory on

Ma of Chiong sisters unmoved by 'running priest's' campaign

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Running priest Fr. Robert Reyes could run all he wanted, all over the Philippines, but for Thelma Chiong, this would not change her belief that justice has already been served for her two daughters after the conviction of Francisco Juan "Paco" Larrañaga and six other persons.

Chiong said she was not affected by Reyes taking up the cause of Larrañaga because the Supreme Court has already made a decision.

Chiong said she believed that the high court's ruling convicting Larrañaga did not only affirm the decision of the lower court, but also upgraded the sentence from life imprisonment to death for the Chiong Seven.

She said it was already final.

"(Reyes) does not know what he is talking about. Even if he will run all over the Philippines, I will not be affected. The case is already over. The decision of the Supreme Court was final and executory," Chiong said yesterday.

Chiong sisters, Jacqueline, 23, and Marijoy, 20, were abducted in Cebu City on July 16, 1997. He said the witnesses had nothing to gain by coming out, but were never given their day in court.

Chiong yesterday lambasted the priest for saying that her two daughters could still be alive, hence justifying his call for the exhumation and DNA testing of the body of Marijoy, which is now buried at Cebu City's Queen City Memorial Garden.

Chiong said Father Reyes was misinformed, describing his conduct as unbecoming of a priest.

Ignorance

Chiong said the priest's statements only showed that he did not really know the exact details of the case.

Chiong pointed out that it was the court itself that had blocked the exhumation of her daughter's body. Besides, Chiong reminded Reyes that the charges filed against the respondents was not murder but kidnapping and illegal detention.

That's why, she said, the late Judge Martin Ocampo ruled that there was no need to exhumate the body.

Larrañaga's mother, Margarita, has meanwhile appealed to Chiong to open her mind and listen to them, especially to the seven young boys and girls who claimed that Larrañaga was with them in Manila when the crime happened from July 16 to 17, 1997.

Margarita said she wanted to meet Chiong in the presence of Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal.

Margarita said that, as mothers, they must unite to seek the truth.

Cebu run

Reyes led the families, friends and supporters of the seven convicts in running on some major thoroughfares in Cebu City on Friday morning to bring to the public's attention their call for a re-trial of the case.

Reyes said he was convinced that there was a miscarriage of justice.

Reyes said he was convinced that Larrañaga was innocent primarily because there were witnesses who had attested that they were with Larrañaga in Manila during the time the

DepEd to tap 'best, brightest' students for PMA

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Education Secretary Florencio Abad said private and public schools will supply recruits to the Philippine Military Academy to increase the academy's odds of graduating quality military officers and to help maximize state education resources.

Lt. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing,

PMA superintendent, sought Abad's help on the PMA's poor quality turnout here on Sunday, after the cadets gave Abad parade honors.

Balaoing told Abad that the PMA graduated only 28 percent of the original members of Class 2004 last year.

Abad said the PMA's problem is a manifestation of the country's

failure to invest in education, noting that the PMA continues to recruit from a pool of high school graduates who are products of bad education.

The PMA wades through a recruitment pool of students whose school environments suffer a shortage of 50,000 classrooms and 27,000 teachers, he said.

Education obtained the highest government investment at 17 percent during the term of former President Fidel Ramos, Abad said, but it requires 21 percent of the national budget to truly improve the state of education in the country.

The Department of Education can only build 6,012 new classrooms and hire 10,000 teachers this year, according to the general appropriations measure passed by Congress.

Abad said the proposed 2005 "bare-bones" education budget was reduced from 13.5 percent in 2004 to 12.5 percent this year (roughly P112.5 billion). The budget cut will hold back reforms at both the DepEd and the PMA.

Abad said Balaoing has now redesigned PMA's recruitment efforts by seeking out the brightest of the country's high schools.

Abad said he agrees with Balaoing's new policy.

"[The PMA has to] move away from a shotgun approach of recruitment or procurement and then look at outstanding stu-

dents in key schools, like the regional science high schools or science and technology schools in the Caraga region, in Eastern Visayas and in the Cordillera," he said.

The PMA's previous recruitment drives, he said, "generally recruit from graduates that swing a lot of resources and yet [is unable] to attract with certainty high-caliber graduates."

Abad said Balaoing is now lobbying for a reduction to the academy's mandated cadet population quota, which requires it to retain over 1,000 cadets yearly despite a dwindling budget and antiquated facilities.

Abad said the government spends P7,720 for each student each year, which pales in comparison to Thailand's annual P50,000 subsidy for its students. Thailand shares the Philippines' economic status, he said.

The government spends up to P2.1 million for each PMA cadet, but the academy had to offer two separate recruitment examinations for PMA Class 2005 because only a few examinees passed.

Abad said his support for PMA recruitment reforms would fit DepEd's other bureaucratic changes. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Tanong Bayan

I-type lang ang:
INQTV < inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <edad>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, at ipadala sa 2910. Winners will be identified on InqTV, Thursdays on ABC.

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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Death not enough to slay ugly alliances in Dingalan

By Tonette Orejas
Dingalan, Aurora

ED PUJEDA disagrees with the "final solution" proposed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago of imposing the death penalty on illegal loggers to save the country's forests.

Where it concerns Dingalan, Aurora, built in the 1930s by logging and destroyed more than 70 years later, also by logging, Pujeda, vice chair of the antilogging group Justice and Peace Action Group in the province, said severe punishment was not enough to stop the plunder of the forests.

That's because in the town where he was born and raised, the 46-year-old Pujeda said the industry had evolved into one where legal and illegal logging have merged inextricably.

This thwarted economy, he said, also corrupted the sense of what is right and wrong in communities that bore the brunt of killer flash floods and landslides after four typhoons in November and December last year. He said the scale and intensity had never been felt in Dingalan in previous years.

The ugly alliances to which farmers are drawn as frontline workers are the results of the "sabwatan" (connivance) by tim-

ber license holders and local and environment officials, said Pujeda. His group has campaigned for a total log ban in Aurora since 1998 on the heels of flash floods that killed eight people that year.

Useless ban

Dismantling the "ugly alliances," he said, would entail prohibiting the operations of logging companies and canceling their permits, prosecuting logging operators, suing elected leaders and environment officials who provide protection, and forbidding them from holding offices again.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor in December suspended the permits of several logging companies in Aurora and Quezon.

But the remoteness of Dingalan from Metro Manila, the seat of the national government, the existence of the logging network, and lack of livelihood support make the temporary log ban useless, Defensor said.

The log ban in Aurora in 1995

and the stealth by which the land-slides-washed logs were controlled by traders attest to how official directives could go to naught, he said.

Pujeda, as well as Benito Lopez of the Samahan ng Magbubukid sa Umiray, believed that forest protection would really put to test the will of national leaders. This time, they said efforts would have to be undertaken within the framework of genuine agrarian reform.

Farmers whose farmlands have been buried in landslides and who lack money to grow cash crops survive by cutting down trees and selling these to sawmills in Barangay Paltic and to Green Circle Properties and Resources in Barangay Umiray, both in Dingalan.

It is this poverty that is exploited by capitalists, said Lopez.

'Alliance'

The Integrated Rural Development Foundation of the Philippines said Don Felipe Buencamino ushered in commercial logging when he opened the first sawmill in Dingalan in the 1930s. Barangay Sawmill, a village at the boundary of Dingalan and Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, is a reminder of the logging boom in the town.

Ilocano and Kapampangan settlers moved in and worked in the

sawmill. Buencamino's operation stopped during World War II when Japanese soldiers took over to get lumber for their barracks and other infrastructure.

After the war, Dingalan Forest Products Corp. (DFPC) began commercial logging in northern Dingalan, in the area around Paltic. South Eastern Timber Corp. (Setic), on the other hand, started its own in southern Dingalan, within the Umiray area, in the 1960s after businessman Roberto Gopiansuy acquired 28,000 hectares of land from Don Andres Soriano.

In 1966, Pujeda remembered his father working as a foreman for Setic.

"At any point, there would be 10 large Japanese ships off the coast," he said, referring to the main market of Dingalan's forest resources.

DFPC shut down on the heels of labor conflicts in the 1970s. It was taken over eventually by Dingalan Wood Industries Corp. (Dwico). By the 1980s, Inter-Pacific Forest Resources Co. (IFRC) entered the scene.

Like their predecessors, the companies still hired employees.

The logging method, formerly through large mechanized chainsaws, changed to "double or triple drum." It was a reference to the use



HUNGRY and homeless typhoon victims turn to sawing drifted logs for a living and as source of materials to rebuild their houses. PDI PHOTO

of bulldozers that had sharp cables.

Thrown over a 400-meter area, the cables, when pulled, felled hundreds of trees, regardless of size, in a short time, according to Luis Magayones, who used to work for IFRC. The government eventually banned the method.

It was during the 1995 logging moratorium that small-scale loggers from Mauban, Quezon, shifted operations to Dingalan.

"They introduced carabao-logging," said Pujeda, who was the barangay captain of Paltic until 1997. By then, an average of 100

carabaos hauled timber from the mountains. In just one trip, he said, the harvest averaged 50,000 board feet of precious wood, especially narra.

On top of what they took from the mountains, Pujeda said logging companies and sawmills bought wood from the carabao loggers. The former saved on costs; the latter had market right in the town.

Throughout the years, said Pujeda, there had not been a practice of replenishing the trees. "They simply cut the trees and abandon the forests."

BCC at 100: Shedding the image of snobbery

By Frank Cimatru
Baguio City

RETURN back in time as an American military officer in the Philippines, exactly 100 years ago. It wasn't as idyllic as you would think.

For example, between 1902 and 1919, three major cholera epidemics swept the Philippines and killed more than 200,000 Filipinos, Chinese and Americans. Include smallpox and malaria, and you know how discomfiting it was to live in the otherwise tropical paradise.

That is why a year after American troops arrived in the Philippines in 1898, they already inquired about Northern Luzon, rightly suspecting that somewhere on the mountains, they could build their hill station or their "Little America" to escape from these tropical diseases.

In 1902, the construction of Kennon Road was started, and the colonization of what is now known as Baguio City began.

William Cameron Forbes, a member of the Philippine Commission, was named in-charge of the building of Baguio.

Strange idea

"It is a new, strange and delightful idea to have laid out a city on this rolling land," Forbes said in 1904 upon reaching Baguio.

Camp John Hay was built as a rest and recreation center for the American soldiers. On Feb. 18, 1905, the Baguio Country Club (BCC) was founded as the summer resort for the American military officers.

Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood was selected as the first president of the BCC. The handful of officers contributed to build an exclusive club which, a year later, would have a clubhouse with social, dining and reading rooms, as well as several cottages, tennis courts and a golf course.

Anthony de Leon, the current BCC general manager, said the original share of the founding members were only about P100 each, which is now equivalent to the round-trip taxi fare from downtown Baguio to the BCC.

"Right now, a share is worth about P700,000, if you can get one," De Leon said.

He said the BCC, in preparation for the production of a coffee-table book on the BCC's centennial this year, tried to contact the descendants of the original founders through e-mails and bulletins, but it had yet to get a response.

Aside from the 7,000-percent increase in the value of the original

share, amenities awaiting the present 2,500 members include 114 deluxe rooms, 115 junior suites, 19 executive suites, 17 cottages, a presidential suite and a penthouse suite.

There is, of course, the par-61 golf course, inevitably described as labyrinthine, and other sports amenities, such as a swimming pool, game room, bowling alleys, badminton and tennis courts, and weight room.

For its centennial celebrations, the BCC management submitted a more than P400-million plan made by Francisco Mañosa & Partners to build 20 priority projects, including six more cabins, a sport pavilion, a facility building, a driving range, an orchidarium and a chapel, in the hope of reviving Baguio's boast as the "honey-moon capital" of the Philippines.

In fact, during Valentine's Day, 36 couples were married in the BCC.

A special commemorative stamp will also be launched on Feb. 18, De Leon said. A torch parade to mark the centennial will also be held that day.

But even if the BCC is celebrating its 100 years of existence, a conscious effort is being made by its present administration to bring Baguio back to the BCC.

For the elite?

"After 100 years, it is about time to shed off one image of the BCC—that it is exclusive, only for the elite," lawyer Federico Agcaolil, BCC president, said in a press conference.

After Wood, a succession of seven Americans served as club president until 1957.

Roman Ozaeta became the first Filipino president when he took over the reins from John Thomas Hicks. In 1972, Ozaeta was replaced by Potenciano Ilusorio. When Ilusorio died in 2001, Agcaolil took over the BCC's reins.

De Leon echoed Agcaolil's sentiment, saying community involvement had been their vision since Ilusorio took over.

"(Ilusorio) had the vision that this would be the best membership club in the Asia-Pacific region. Our projects and renovation planning were based on that vision that this would be the best service-oriented establishment but without the snobbery," De Leon said.

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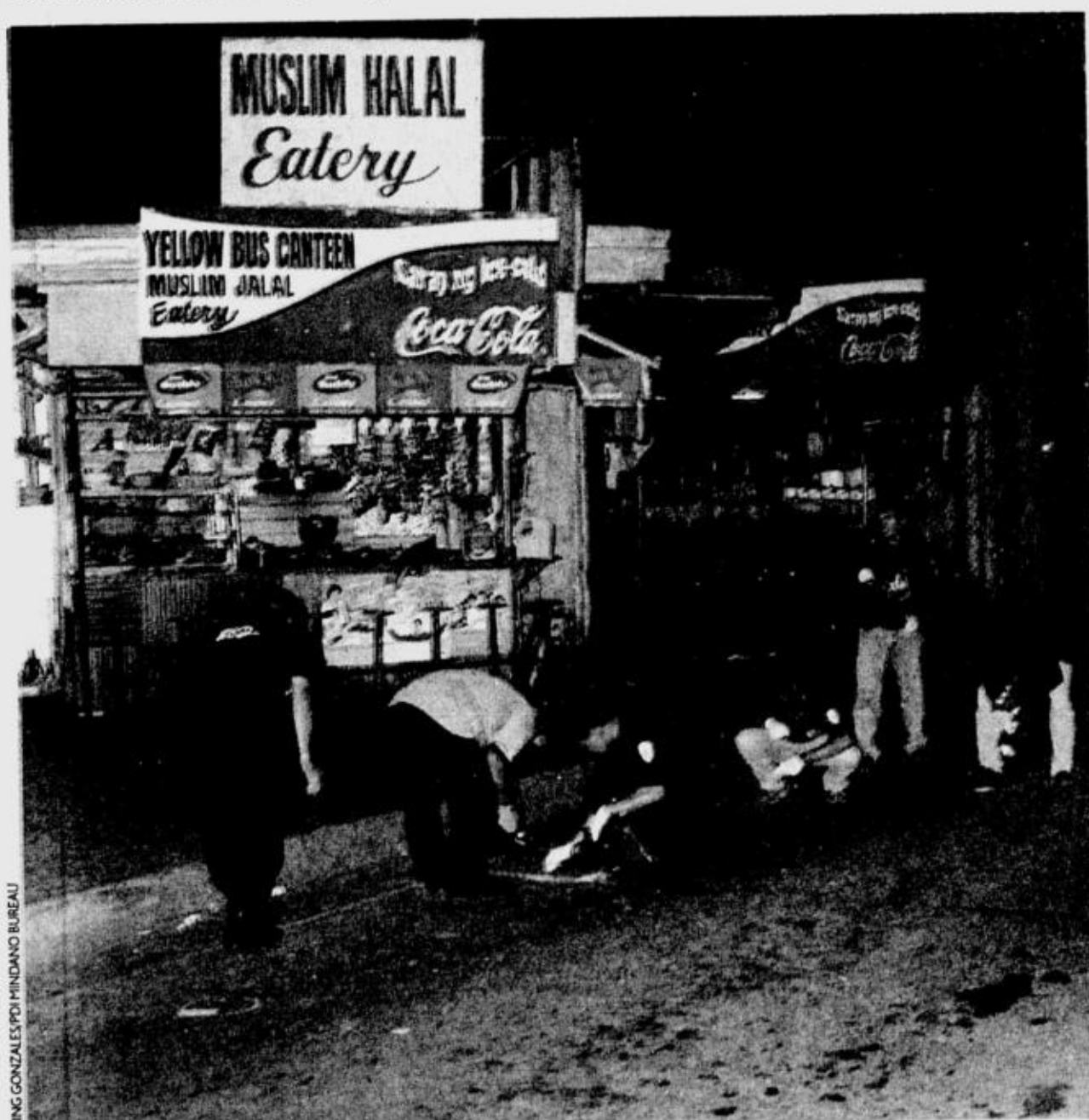


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FRESH reinforcements arrive by a Philippine Air Force C-130 transport plane. Some 3,000 government troops are now involved in a massive operation to crush the rebellion by an MNLF breakaway group. AFP



EXPLOSIVE Ordnance and Detection Group of the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit search for evidence in the area where a bomb exploded at Gate 1 inside the Davao City Overland Transport Terminal.

3 BIG BLASTS

Seven people were killed and nearly 150 wounded in three explosions on Monday

Makati

Three people killed by an explosion on a bus in the central business district



Davao
One killed after a grenade attack at bus station

General Santos
Three people killed in blast at shopping mall

REUTERS



POLICE inspect the bombing site outside the popular Gaisano shopping mall in General Santos City. REUTERS

Duterte wants Misuari freed

From page A1

MNLF or the MILF, which are closely keeping to the mainstream of the peace process. We are dealing with renegades from these two groups that are abhorred and rejected by them," Ms Arroyo said.

The President had visited the wake for the slain soldiers at the Philippine Navy Gymnasium in Fort Bonifacio and handed out P100,000 each to 10 families.

Malacañang said it received reports that the jailed Moro leader had played a role in the violence, which has affected half of the 18 towns in Sulu and displaced more than 22,000 people.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government had cut off any communications between Misuari, who is detained at a military camp in Laguna, and his followers.

Duterte, who considers himself an "avid" friend of Misuari, said keeping Misuari in jail would not solve the crisis in Sulu.

Misuari was charged with rebellion after his supporters attacked military outposts and a police station in Sulu in November 2001 to stop the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The uprising, which lasted for days, left more than 100 people dead. Misuari fled to Malaysia where authorities arrested him on Nov. 24, 2001 as he arrived in Sabah by boat. He was detained for breaking Malaysian immigration laws before being deported to Manila in January 2002.

He was initially charged in the Jolo, Sulu, Regional Trial Court on Jan. 3, 2002, but the trial was transferred to Laguna on orders of then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Appoint new judge

In Manila, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez asked the Supreme Court to appoint a new judge to hear the rebellion case against Misuari after the magistrate trying the case resigned.

In a letter to Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday, Gonzalez asked the tribunal to designate a replacement for Laguna Judge Estela Andres.

"The trial of Mr. Nur Misuari has been postponed for quite sometime in view of the resignation of Judge Estela Andres which left a vacancy in the court," Gonzalez said.

He said no other judge in Laguna could continue hearing the case because Andres was specifically designated by the high court.

Andres has opted for early retirement and will be going on leave starting March 1 before retiring on May 1 this year.

"In view of the recent developments in Mindanao and the fact that state prosecutors have already presented three witnesses during the trial, may I request that a new judge be designated by the Supreme Court to continue the trial of Mr. Misuari," Gonzalez said.

But last night, the United Opposition expressed concern over the escalating violence in Mindanao and called on the government to call an immediate ceasefire in the wake of mounting casualties on both sides.

"We're very much bothered by what's going on in Mindanao, particularly in Sulu," said the opposition spokesperson, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay. "That's why the United Opposition is requesting the government to call a ceasefire as soon as possible because of the mounting casualties and to provide assistance to the displaced residents."

Reports reaching Army headquarters at

Fort Bonifacio identified the slain soldier as Sgt. Josue Labitan and those wounded as Pfc. Adelfo Cordova and Pfc. Roy Corpin.

Lt. Col. Alberto Macairog of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion said his men killed at least 20 members of the MNLF under Ustadz Habier Malik during Monday's encounter in Baranga Kulay-kulay.

Since Feb. 7, the death toll on both sides has reached 71. Thirty-one of the fatalities were soldiers, including Lt. Col. Dennis Villanueva, commander of the Army's 53rd Infantry Battalion.

Scores of soldiers and rebels had also been injured.

As of yesterday, firefights were still raging in various areas of Sulu.

Armed followers of Misuari had already "escaped" from their stronghold in Panamao, Sulu, and were now being pursued by soldiers, the military said yesterday.

In an interview over ANC, Gen. Efren Abu, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, said the military was already conducting "mopping-up" operations in Barangay Bitan-ag, the former lair of the so-called Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG).

Asked if the rebels had "escaped" from the area, Abu responded: "Yes, but as I've said we have inflicted maximum casualties and many of them are withdrawing and the Rangers are pursuing them."

Abu said the military's Joint Task Force Comet under Brig. Gen. Agustin Dema-ala had already occupied Barangay Bitan-ag.

Besides massive air strikes, the military sent six battalions from the Marines and the Army Scout Rangers to Sulu province after the conflict escalated.

Food ration

The military offensive, involving about 3,000 soldiers, has displaced thousands of people in the towns of Panamao, Luuk, Maimbung, Jolo, Parang, Patikul, Kalingalan-Kaluang, Indanan and Panglima Estino.

Amilbahar Amilasan, provincial civil defense coordinator, said 22,123 people had fled the clashes as of yesterday.

Amilasan said the evacuees were housed in various centers put up by the government while some of them were staying in school buildings and with their relatives.

He said food rations could not be delivered to some areas because of the clashes.

Maydelyn Pahajin, provincial social welfare officer, said food aid to some areas could only be delivered by boat.

Pahajin said welfare personnel were able to extend assistance to evacuees in "safer areas." She said only 1,334 families out of the total 3,626 families who had left their homes had received food aid.

Lack of medicine

Health personnel in Panamao said many children and elderly people had started falling ill because of lack of proper nutrition and sanitation at the evacuation centers.

Dr. Silak Asanji, Panamao health officer, said his staff was also having problems because of lack of medicine. "We need medicines for diarrhea, fever and common colds. We also need antibiotics," she said.

Amilasan appealed for help from the private sector, saying the government could not meet all the needs of the evacuees.

Reports from Ger- melina A. Lacorte, Ed General, Julie S. Alipala, Joselle dr. Badilla and Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Philip C. Tubeza, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Alcuin Papa

Stock market rises despite attacks but peso shaken

From page A1

While Monday's bombings had little impact on the market, they did hurt the peso.

The series of bomb blasts spooked the foreign exchange market, dragging the peso back to the 55 level before closing at 54.695 against the US dollar.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 5.60 points, or 0.3 percent, at 2,090.10, its best finish since Jan. 17, 2000, when it ended at 2,097.23.

Volume was 6.36 billion shares worth P2.08 billion, up from 4.25 billion shares worth P1.89 billion on Monday.

Fundamentals sound

"Basically, the fundamentals remain sound. The bombings shouldn't change them," said BPI securities senior manager Roberto Cano. "What we had early in the session was a knee-jerk reaction, with investors taking the huge drop as an opportunity to hunt for bargains."

Jitters over the wave of bus bombings, with the third and last one hitting the Makati central business district, negated the peso's gains from the country's removal from a global watch list against money laundering as well as the appointment of new economic managers.

Peso sheds 13.5 centavos

After a strong finish of 54.56 on Monday, the local currency opened weak at 55 and hit an intra-day low of 55.05 before recouping some of its losses in afternoon trade.

At the end of the day, the peso still shed 13.5 centavos to close at 54.695 at the Philippine Dealing System. Volume rose to \$331.5 mil-

lion from \$326.67 million Monday. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said there was an initial knee-jerk reaction against the peso but fundamentals would bring it back to the normal rate.

President Macapagal-Arroyo contrasted the resiliency of the currency and stock markets yesterday to the panic and fear from the bomb blasts in Makati, Davao and Gen. Santos to show that investor confidence in the country would not be easily shaken by terrorist attacks.

"Terrorism occurs all over the world not only in the Philippines," the President said in an open forum during a trip to Batangas City. "If we have the right infrastructure, we will still be able to attract foreign investments."

Strong confidence

Businessmen were unfazed by news that the Abu Sayyaf carried out the Valentine's Day bomb attacks.

"It is heartening that the Philippine financial markets have largely shrugged off last night's bombings which are appropriately viewed as the work of fringe terrorists," said Philippine-US Business Council chair Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. said.

"The performance of the stock market and the peso today indicate strong confidence in the Philippine economy," he said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

No lasting impact

Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, said the strong showing of the capital markets "should leave us no doubt about the economic

fundamentals of our country."

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, doubted the bomb attacks would have a lasting impact on foreign investors considering that there were worst attacks abroad.

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Where's Valentine's ...

From page A1

ceive their P3,000 gift promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Perhaps on April 1?

The Confederation for the Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said that as of yesterday, the pay day after Valentine's Day, no government body had given any V-Day bonus to its employees in compliance with Executive Order No. 115 of Ms Arroyo.

"The sincerity of the government in giving its employees relief ... is seriously in doubt," Courage president Ferdinand Gaité told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"The Valentine gift should have been given on Feb. 14," Gaité said. Or it should have been included in yesterday's pay distribution, he added.

No agency released bonus

"The Department of Agriculture has yet to give the bonus, so does the National Printing Office and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. (Our monitoring) showed that no agency has released any bonus," Gaité said.

The INQUIRER learned that the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Land Reform and Department of Education had not released their respective bonuses either.

A source at the Department of Budget and Management told Courage that the bonus could be released today or within the week.

"(This bonus) is long delayed. I say long delayed because it should have been given in December," Gaité said.

Gaité was referring to the P5,000 cash gift released to all government agencies in December but was not given last year.

Insulted

"We were insulted when they said the Valentine gift was meant for government employees to go out on a date. With the current economic situation, government employees can no longer afford to eat out—not even in a small restaurant," Gaité said.

Courage, which is asking for a P3,000 across-the-board increase—not a one-time gift of the same amount—called the government's Valentine gift "unacceptable."

The group noted that although the government admitted that the average monthly cost of living stands at P18,000 in Metro Manila and P15,000 across the country, the entry-level government worker

receives a little more than P5,000.

Employees of the Department of Education were dismayed by Secretary Florencio Abad's defense of the P3,000 "Valentine's Day bonus" that each of the 1.2 million government workers were supposed to get this month.

The leader of the union representing DepEd's 45,000 non-teaching staff said no justification was enough to "change the fact that Malacañang reneged on its promise."

Government workers traditionally receive a "cash gift" at the end of the year. In December 2003, they received P5,000 each.

But last December, Malacañang surprised government workers when it announced it was scrapping the P5,000 cash gift.

Better than nothing

Due to widespread protests, Malacañang promised to give a P3,000 bonus in February.

"Whether we see it as a case of the glass being half-empty or half-full does not change the fact that the amount falls short by P2,000," said Domingo Alidon, president of the DepEd National Employees Union.

Last week, Abad told grumbling DepEd employees and public school teachers that they should be thankful they were at least getting something.

He said Malacañang had contemplated not giving the traditional bonus.

"I'm happy with that (amount of P3,000) because for a while I thought there would be no bonus at all," Abad had said.

Pawned-in bonus

"Parang kami pa ngayon ang may utang na loob sa gobyerno (It seems now we should be grateful to the government instead of the other way around)," Alidon said.

He said that many employees had taken out loans to augment their salaries during the Christmas holidays because they expected to get a P5,000 bonus this February.

Alidon pointed out that government workers had not received any salary increase under the Arroyo administration.

"Now they're saying that if it were not for the savings, we would not be getting any bonus. So there was no plan to give us anything. Our welfare is the least of the government's considerations," he said.

Alidon said his group was drawing up plans with other government unions to launch protest actions and press for a salary increase.

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POLICE investigators inspect the scene of the crime. At right are the cartographic sketches of the bombing suspects—in Makati described as 35 years old and a bus passenger (above), and in Davao described as a 10-year-old boy (below).



REBEL commander Habier Malik is interviewed Feb. 11.

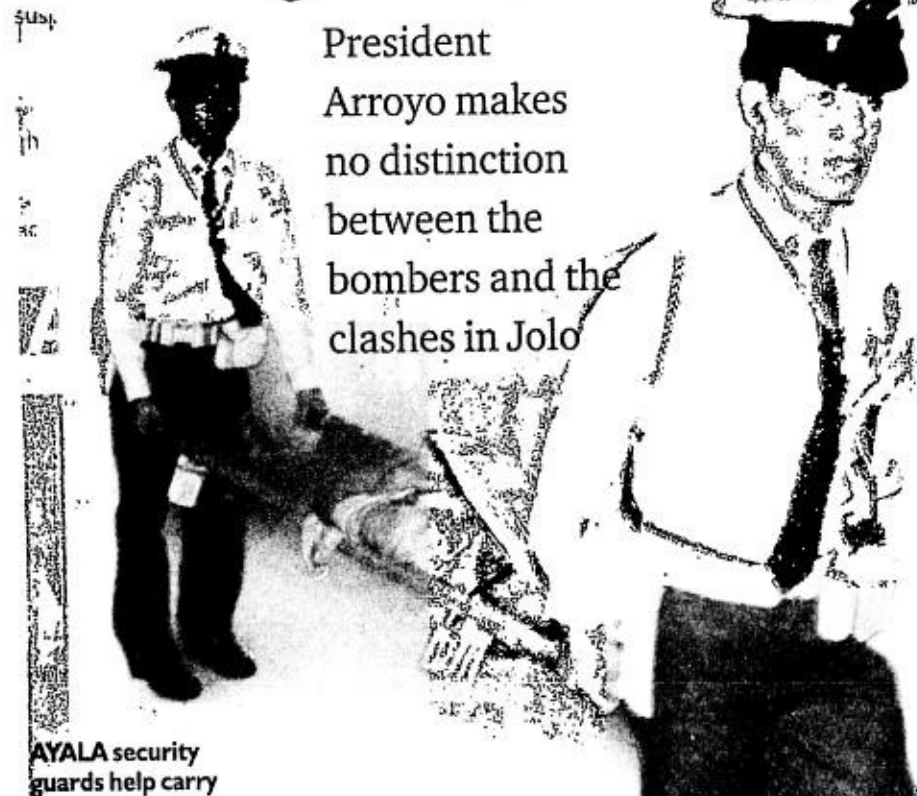


MISUARI nephew Julhambri Misuari.



RUDY ESPERAS

From Jolo to GenSan to Davao to Makati



President Arroyo makes no distinction between the bombers and the clashes in Jolo



THROUGH a broken bus window, a man looks at the wreckage darkly.

AYALA security guards help carry the dead and the wounded from the bloody, chaotic scene.

JESS YUSON

INJURED passenger waits to be rushed to the hospital following the bomb explosion.

AFP



THE WILD WEST it is not but Makati, the country's central business district, is now being patrolled by members of the PNP SWAT team.



INTENTLY listening to a briefing by Makati police chief Supt. Jovito Gutierrez at the site of the bombing, President Arroyo also visited the victims of the blast at the Makati Medical Center.

JIM GUANO PUNZALAN



FOR PEACE, sobriety, Muslims and Christians pray together along Ayala Avenue. The group condemned the violence in Jolo and the Valentine's Day bombings.

REM ZACORA



SECURITY men prowl the streets of an embattled city as bombing suspects are being hunted; Abu Sayyaf claiming responsibility, probed.



UPWARD trend in trading at the Philippine Stock Exchange with Philippine shares closing at a new five-year high on Tuesday even after the coordinated bombings in three cities on Monday.

BULLITT MARQUEZ/AP

Bomb parts like those used by military

EXPLOSIVES found in Parañaque City yesterday could have come from sources within the armed forces.

Ranking city police officials said the bomb parts thrown by an unidentified man along the East Service Road were similar to those used by the military.

The explosives and components included four pieces of TNT blocks, one C-4 block, two boxes of igniter time blasting, five triggering devices, two boxes of electric blasting caps, one electrical wire and one demolition device.

These were enough to build a bomb, police said.

Edsa bombing

The bomb parts were found hours before a bomb ripped through a bus on Edsa near Ayala, killing three and wounding more than 60.

While the ranking police official could not categorically say that the explosives and bomb parts were from the armed forces, he said, "The lot number could trace and identify who and where the explosives were issued."

He explained that the control numbers of the explosives were intact.

"It could have been stolen from the military arsenal or could have been taken from a combat site," the police official said.

Las Piñas act

In an effort to prevent any bombings in Las Piñas, Mayor Imelda Aguilar directed police chief Supt. Perpetuo Sanson to field more men in malls, schools, markets, bus and jeepney terminals, and other vital installations in the city.

Aguilar's move came in the heels of a string of bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos.

The mayor also ordered the police to set up checkpoints on major roads in the city to thwart any terrorist attack.

To augment the police, Aguilar also mobilized barangay officials, rescue teams and other civic groups for intelligence gathering.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Battle for mall revenues

From page A24

paying their business fees to Cainta, "to avoid penalties and interests as well as double payment of fees."

On Monday, the Pasig government set up a one-stop shop on the mall's second floor where stall owners could apply for business permits. Cainta, on the other hand, also has its own action center on the same floor.

A Pasig official said policemen had been ordered to extend their patrol duty from Robinson's mall along the Marcos Highway, to nearby Sta. Lucia mall. The Robinson branch pays its taxes to Pasig City.

The dispute over the Sta. Lucia mall is only part of a longtime boundary dispute between Pasig and Cainta. In 2002, Cainta obtained an injunction from an Antipolo court ordering Pasig City to "restrain from proceeding further collecting taxes from among the disputed areas under litigation...; from pursuing the threatened auction sale of the affected properties; from making pronouncements of jurisdictional title over the disputed areas...; and to reimburse in full the taxes it received from paying residents."

Yesterday, Mayor Ilagan appealed to Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio to wait for the Supreme Court's final decision before proceeding with its collection efforts.

Eusebio said he had no choice but to enforce the court decision. "We went to court. We won. If I don't enforce the decision, what will my constituents think of me? What will the court say?"

Land dispute eyed in Vidamo slay

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said that a big land dispute might have led to the killing of Las Piñas Public Attorney's Office (PAO) chief Teresita Vidamo last week.

Gonzalez said that Vidamo's driver had informed investigators that she represented squatters in a big land dispute in Las Piñas and that this might be the reason behind her murder.

"The case was related to a big land dispute... being a PAO lawyer, she represented the squatters against developers or whatsoever," Gonzalez said.

"That is what this witness is saying. He has been interviewed already but he still has to undergo tactical interrogation by the National Bureau of Investigation," he added.

Gonzalez said that the witness would later give a sworn testimony before the NBI and would also give a description of Vidamo's assailants.

Four unidentified men ambushed Vidamo in the morning of Feb. 9 as she was about to leave her house at Lot 13-B, Casimiro Avenue, Phase I Casimiro Village, Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas.

Gonzalez immediately ordered the NBI to help the local police in investigating the cold-blooded murder.

Vidamo's four assailants allegedly approached her as she was about to board her L300 van. Two of the suspects positioned themselves at the rear of the vehicle and served as backup while the two other men walked up to Vidamo and shot her several times in the head.

After the victim fell on the ground, the suspects fled on foot toward Naga road. The victim was rushed to the nearby Zarate Medical Clinic but she was declared dead on arrival.

The police recovered two .45-caliber shells and a 9-mm shell.



COUPLES celebrate their marriage with a kiss during a mass wedding held at the Monumento Circle in Caloocan City on Valentine's Day. About 1,200 couples tied the knot during the event sponsored by the local government.

REM ZAMORA

1,200 couples tie knot to celebrate day of hearts

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WHILE other couples went to hotels, motels, restaurants and parks to celebrate Valentine's Day, hundreds of couples in Caloocan City chose to go to the Bonifacio Monument Circle the other day.

There they did not only greet each other "Happy Valentine's Day," they also exchanged "I dos."

Widow Rebecca Tongha, 65, and her live-in partner for 15 years Epitacio Mercader Jr., 54,

were among the more than 1,200 couples who joined the Kasalang Bayan the other night.

"We wanted our partnership to be legal," Tongha said, even if her children by her first husband did not know their mother was getting married.

Others even brought their kids during the wedding. Some brides were also pregnant.

But while couples around the monument were all smiles, drivers around the rotunda were cursing the traffic.

The rotunda was closed for the ceremony and motorists had to be rerouted.

The civil mass wedding was sponsored by the city civil registry department. The government spent around P50,000 for the ceremony.

"We want to give a chance to those who could not afford a wedding," city registrar Luchi Flores.

Looking at the couples, mostly in white and seated in front of the Bonifacio Monument, Flores said

she had topped her previous record when she organized a mass wedding in November last year. The record then was 1,100 couples.

"I am overwhelmed with the response of our residents," Mayor Enrico Echiverri said.

The mass wedding was part of the city's 43rd Foundation Anniversary celebration.

Flores said that aside from the free marriage services, the city government would also help the couples in the documentation of their children.



VIP PROTECTORS

Policemen aim their guns at an imagined attacker while participating in a VIP (very important person) security and protection course at the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame.

JOAN BONDOC

No work today in Caloocan

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IF YOU go to the Caloocan City Hall today, don't be surprised if nobody could attend to you.

Better yet, go to the Bonifacio Monument Circle where a series of activities is scheduled.

Today is a special non-working holiday in Caloocan City as residents celebrate the city's 43rd foundation anniversary.

In exchange for the revelry, however, brace yourself for heavy traffic.

Motorists will have to be rerouted again as the city government will be closing the Bonifacio Monument rotunda starting noon today.

A mass will be held at 3 p.m. at the Bonifacio Monument grounds, while the Miss Caloocan and Miss Young Caloocan pageant starts at 8 p.m.

Because the northbound lane of Edsa shall be left open, vehicles from Edsa going to Malabon City or Navotas must turn to MacArthur Highway, left to Potrero Street, left to Araneta Avenue and right to Samson Road.

To Valenzuela

Those coming from J.P. Rizal Avenue going to Valenzuela City must turn right to either 5th, 8th or 9th Avenue then left to B. Serrano then right to Edsa before going to MacArthur Highway.

Vehicles from Valenzuela City going to Manila City may take Samson Road, left to Heroes Del '96, then left to 10th Avenue, right to either Baltazar or Nadurata Streets, left to 9th Avenue the right to J.P. Rizal Avenue.

Motorists from Valenzuela City to Quezon City shall turn left and counterflow through Edsa until the first U-turn slot to the southbound lane.

Vehicles from Malabon or Navotas going to Manila City are advised to take C3 Road, while those headed to Quezon City must turn right to A. Mabini Street or Torres Bugallon Street, left to 10th Avenue, left to B. Serrano going to Edsa.

Marikina City offers reward for 'capture' of this janitor

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE JANITOR fish has not only virtually wiped out other fish varieties in the Marikina River, it is also threatening the stability of the riverbanks, according to a Marikina City councilor.

Councilor Ferdie Marco believes the janitor fish contributes to the erosion of the banks, which in turn, causes cracks in a jogging lane along the river.

Officials noticed the cracks more than a year ago. "The janitor fish causes soil erosion because it digs into the soil (of the banks). We believe it is also causing the cracks in our jogging lanes," Marco said on the phone.

Expanding river

Asked if that meant the river was expanding, Marco said that was likely.

"One day, a jogger might just fall into the river," he said.

To control the fish, now largely considered a pest in

river and lake systems, the City Council has set aside P50,000 as incentive for those who will harvest janitor fish.

Under a resolution Marco authored, a person will be paid 20 centavos for each janitor fish he catches from the Marikina River.

The fish can be brought to the city's Waste Management and the Parks and Wildlife offices.

1 to 44,000

Over the weekend, students, members of non-government organizations, and residents netted some 44,000 janitor fish. Interestingly, only one small tilapia was caught in the four-hour cleanup drive.

"That's one tilapia out of 43,600 janitor fish. That means it's all janitor fish now in the Marikina River," Marco lamented.

Marco said shoemakers used to go to the river after work to fish.

"Fishing used to be a

source of livelihood. They can't do that anymore now," he said. "There are no more fishes in the river, except the janitor fish."

The city's troubles with the alien fish started more than two years ago.

Escaped pets

It is still not clear how the fish got into the Marikina and Pasig rivers. Officials said they might have escaped from breeding grounds in Pampanga, Laguna and Bulacan and found their way into natural water systems.

Another theory is pet owners, tired of breeding them, might have simply dumped them into the Marikina and Pasig Rivers.

A sturdy species, the janitor fish survives in polluted and murky waters, the reason why they have multiplied in Metro Manila's rivers.

Earlier, Mandaluyong City, too, launched a fishing competition aimed at eradicating janitor fish from the Pasig River.

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PASIG, CAINTA IN TUG OF WAR

Battle for mall revenues

By Luige A. del Puerto

PASIG CITY is poised to take over the collection of business permit fees and taxes from commercial establishments inside the Sta. Lucia Mall in Cainta, Rizal.

This developed after a motion for reconsideration filed earlier by Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Inc. and Cainta town was rejected by the Court of Ap-

peals last month.

Pasig won a tax collection case against Sta. Lucia filed earlier in a regional trial court.

As a result, the city advised Sta. Lucia and its stall owners to pay their business permit fees and other fees to Pasig, instead of Cainta.

But Cainta Mayor Mon Ilagan said the town would go to the Supreme Court to appeal the de-

cision. Since the decision was not final and executory, Ilagan said it would be premature for Pasig officials to collect taxes from the mall, or for stall owners to apply for business permits at the Pasig City Hall.

A fourth of Cainta's real property tax and business permit fees are paid by Sta. Lucia Mall and its tenants. Town treasurer Edgar Villanueva said losing revenues it

would have made from Sta. Lucia "would reduce the status of the town to a barangay."

A rough estimate showed that Cainta would lose some P30 to P40 million a year if it fails to stop Pasig from claiming the property where Sta. Lucia stands.

In a letter to Sta. Lucia dated Feb. 2, Pasig officials warned the mall and the stall owners about

BATTLE/A23



SOMETHING FISHY

Marikina City street dancers in fish costumes join the "Parade of Artists" along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City for the launching of National Arts Month 2005.

Skip highway, mayor appeals to motorists

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MOTORISTS, be warned. Use the MacArthur Highway only when it is absolutely necessary.

This narrow road, which passes through Valenzuela City on the way to parts of Bulacan and Pampanga, has become an alternative route for motorists who want to avoid the steep toll rates at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

But the highway has now become the cause of traffic jams, prompting Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian to appeal to motorists to look for other routes. Or, at the very least, motorists should strictly obey traffic rules to speed up traffic, the mayor added.

The volume of vehicles passing through the busy highway had already tripled since the NLEX increased its fees by more than 400 percent, Gatchalian told the INQUIRER yesterday. "Our forecast is that the number of vehicles would continue to increase in the next few days," he added. While the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority had already promised to deploy more traffic enforcers in the area, Gatchalian said the traffic situation appeared to be hopeless.

MacArthur Highway is a major—and busy—route for trucks from Northern Luzon going to the warehouses and factories in the cities of Valenzuela, Malabon and Caloocan. When Gatchalian took over as mayor, one of his first projects was to decongest MacArthur Highway, hoping that lighter traffic would boost business in the city. But now, he said, his efforts appear to be wasted, he said.

Teenager killed, 2 hurt in collision

A HIGH school student was killed and two others were critically wounded when the motorcycle they were riding collided with a van in Pasay City on Monday.

The victims were rushed to San Juan De Dios hospital for treatment, but Ma. Grace Batino, 16, did not make it. Romeo Balondo, 18, and another minor are still confined at the hospital, according to traffic investigator PO2 Alberto Ignacio.

The three were on board a motorcycle traveling toward Aurora Boulevard in Pasay City late Monday evening when they hit a Mitsubishi van.

The driver of the van, Jose Talero, 35, is facing charges of homicide and double serious physical injuries, Ignacio said. Nancy C. Carvajal



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Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



Compiled by L. Manguiat

WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 16, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A25

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

US Embassy certificate 'to pin Taulava'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SMOKING gun against Talk 'N Text cager Asi Taulava?

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the US Embassy in Manila has informed the National Bureau of Investigation that Taulava is a permanent resident of the United States, and is therefore not a Filipino.

Gonzalez said acting US immigration attache Julian Briola informed the NBI in May 2004 that Taulava and her mother, Pauline Mateaki, are both permanent US residents.

"This shows that he is really not a Filipino," said Gonzalez.

He said the Department of Justice will ask the US Embassy to certify Briola's letter and other re-

lated documents so that these can be used to convince a Manila court to lift its injunction against Taulava's deportation.

Taulava was one of the six foreign-born players whom the DOJ said faked their Filipino citizenship.

In his letter to the NBI, Briola said Taulava's mother was born on July 13, 1946 in Vaotu'u, Tongatapu, Tonga, and the daughter of Tongan nationals Semisi Mateaki and Maveti Mokofisi.

Taulava's camp has claimed that Pauline was born in Barangay San Jose, Bobon, Samar, to Ana Hernandez and Felipe Mateaki.

The NBI, however, said that a check with the National Statistics Office and the municipal registrar of Bobon, Samar showed that there were no records of marriage between Hernandez and Mateaki.

Hernandez and Mateaki also had no records of birth in Bobon, the NBI added.



CHINESE Ambassador Wu Hongbu (fourth from left) links hands with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo (fifth from left) and Filipino sports officials (from left) PSC commissioner Mike Barredo, Philsoc chair Roberto Pagdanganan, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, PSC officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez and commissioners Ambrosio De Luna and Leon Montemayor.

RP gets Chinese aid for SEAG crown bid

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHILIPPINES has officially turned to Asia's sports powerhouse.

National athletes and coaches from 14 sports will be sent to China to undergo an intensive training program in preparation for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games here on Nov. 27-Dec. 5.

"We just want to take advantage of this opportunity and China's hospitality," said Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez after forging the RP-China Sports Cooperation program yesterday with top Beijing sports officials at the Philsports in Pasig City.

The PSC originally listed archery, athletics, basketball, badminton, gymnastics, swimming, table tennis, volleyball, weightlifting and wushu

as "focus sports."

But Chinese Sports Minister Liu Peng, represented by Ambassador Wu Hongbo, yesterday approved the inclusion of football, fencing, shooting and wrestling.

Meanwhile, Ramirez also announced the formation of the Godfather Committee, which will oversee the P160 million fund for the athletes' training program.

"We'll make sure that only the best, those athletes with gold-medal potentials will benefit," said Ramirez.

The committee is composed of PSC's national training director Michael Keon, Philippine Olympic Committee officials Steve Hontiveros and Joey Romasanta as well as Butch Tuason and Tessa Mangahas of the First Gentleman Foundation.



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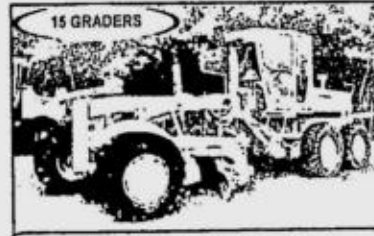
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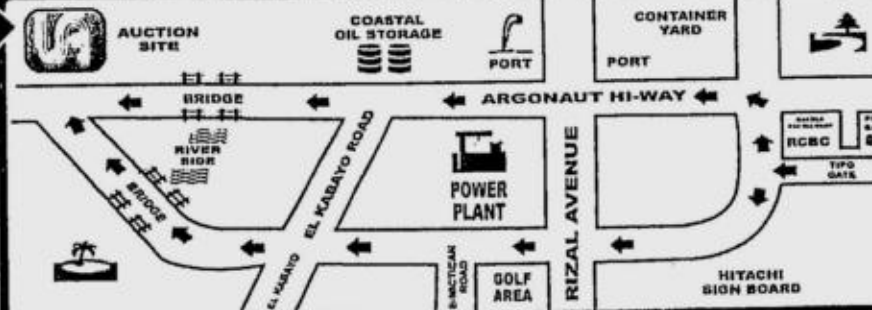
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UV gains C-League finals

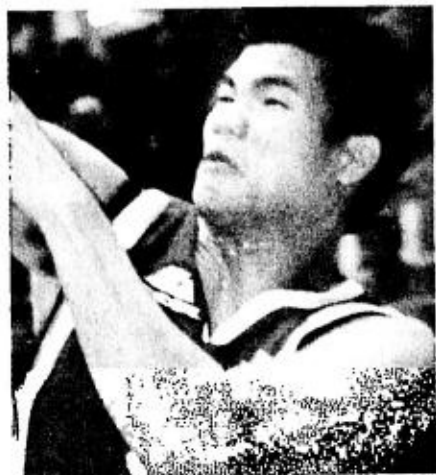
By Francis Ochoa

CEBU CITY—Finding the lane clogged by a mobile 6-foot-9 big man and the entire halfcourt blanketed by a seemingly impenetrable zone defense, the University of the Visayas Green Lancers did the next best thing.

The Lancers turned to their perimeter game and deflated the gritty University of Mindanao Wildcats, 84-74, in the Champions Cup southern leg at the New Cebu Coliseum.

In the second game, a pair of familiar heroes provided the University of Cebu Webmasters a lift in an 81-70 dismantling of the University of San Jose Recoletos Jaguars.

Youthful Orville Saludod and Lloyd Ortigueza, who played a pivotal role in the Webmasters' victory over West Negros



QUIÑAHAN (above) puts Eman in shade.

College Sunday, exploded for 17 and 16 points, respectively, to power UC.

The Green Lancers and the Webmasters

thus booked tickets to the main draw of the national intercollegiate tournament, which will be held in Manila.

It was extra special for the Webmasters, who are in the national finals for the first time in four years.

"Saludod is a warrior," said UC coach and former PBA gunner Roehl Gomez. "He is disciplined and he has the leadership. When mixed with the veteran players, they make a perfect combination."

Playmaker Mark Ababon led the charge for UV, scoring 11 of his 19 points in the second half as he helped the Green Lancers peel away from the UM Wildcats, who found their 1-3-1 zone defense tattered by their opponents' outside shots.

"We had to break that (1-3-1) zone, we knew that was their main weapon," said UV coach Boy Cabahug.

On defense, UV put the clamps on Samigue Eman, the heart and soul of the

Wildcats' game plan.

"We knew that he would be the barometer of their (UM) game so we thought that if we could hold Eman down in offense, we might come out with the win," said Cabahug.

PBL standout JR Quiñahan shouldered the bulk of the load in trying to contain Eman, who was limited to just four points in the pivotal second half.

Quiñahan also shone offensively, knocking in 15 points, as the Lancers advanced to the national finals of this US NCAA-type of tournament.

The scores:

UV 84—Ababon 19, Quiñahan 15, Rodriguez 13, Mepana 12, Akad 10, Sevilla 6, Binongo 4, Balague 2, Berame 2, Abalong 2.

UM 74—Eman 14, Gonzaga 13, Saldia 12, Medalla 11, Callo 11, Awitin 5, Bironde 4, Lleralde 2, Calimpong 2.

Quarterscores: 29-22, 42-36, 64-54, 84-74

Putch Puyat fights the pool terrorists

WE'VE got sad news for fans of Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

The two world pool superstars have threatened to boycott the Philippine team for this year's Southeast Asian Games.

That may not be as terrifying as the bloody Valentine's Day bombings in Mindanao and Makati.

But latest reports showed there's serious trouble brewing on the national billiards front.

The mess has threatened the expected gold medal harvest of the RP team in the SEA Games.

There's also reason to believe that self-styled saviors of sports, who now function like terrorists, are causing the trouble.

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

No need to name names.

These should be properly bared by a group of tested supporters that will also line up a series of moves to counter the so-called terrorists.

Anyway, what really caught attention last week was the news that Aristeo "Putch" Puyat has threatened to withdraw support for the national pool team competing in this year's SEA Games in Manila.

To those who don't know Putch Puyat, he's just the acknowledged godfather of RP pool.

He's the moving spirit behind the rise of Reyes, Bustamante, and a host of other Pinoy stars in world pool.

Now, what has made the threatened pullout by Puyat truly terrifying was the news that he'd be taking Bata and Django with him.

That could sound self-serving.

But we've been promptly told that Puyat was not about to use the two world pool superstars as his pawns.

Django and Bata have agreed to join the fight against the pool terrorists on their own.

For a review, there was this report that a group out to sow trouble and kick out Billiard and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto Fajardo had tried to conduct a tryout for the Philippine team.

There were tips that this terrorist team, backed by a white-clad former gangster who's no stranger to assassinations, has the blessings of the Philippine Olympic Committee president.

It seems that the POC chief, whose trouble-free ascendancy to the post was greatly helped by the controversial sports official, has bestowed full trust on the former gangster.

It was reported that, when they were twisting arms to get sure backing in the POC presidential race, Fajardo had refused to commit his vote.

The guy behaved like a true gentleman but, in the process, drew the ire of the gangland figure.

Funny, but the names of Francis Pangilinan and Niño Muhlach had also been dropped in the imagined power play at the BSCP.

Well, the POC chief is bound to have the surprise of his life.

He should get the real score after Puyat & Co. have announced a series of strong, solid moves to contain terrorism in Philippine pool.

Communicator Tony Baranda, a pool scholar and dedicated supporter of the RP team all these years, said Puyat is being joined in his anti-terrorist thrust by tested fighters. Mentioned were the names of Yen Makabenta and Sebastian Chua.

With the report that Rene Saguisag, trusted freedom fighter, has given a go-signal for the election of a new board at the BSCP, a cleansing of the ranks should come next.

The framework for a national billiards grassroots development program, including a tournament involving 66 cities, will also be detailed soon.

Putch Puyat and his trusted allies are arming up and doing their boldest best to make sure the terrorists don't succeed.

22 PBA cagers free agents soon

TWENTY-TWO players, including three blue-chip stars in the Philippine Basketball Association, will have expired contracts at the end of this month.

San Miguel Beer center Nic Belasco, Red Bull's Jimwell Torion and Alaska's Don Allado lead the small list of players—seven of them from Sta. Lucia Realty—who will become restricted free agents by March 1.

Meanwhile, Red Bull has shipped guard Denver Lopez to SMB for forward Brian Gahol.

Other players with expiring contracts: Gerard Francisco, Paeng Santos, Francis Adriano, Wilmer Ong, Noli Loosin, Chris Cantorjos, Boyet Fernandez, Anton Villoria, Estang Ballesteros, Jonathan de Guzman, Poch Jululo, Zaldy Realubit, Tony Boy Espinosa, Jovy Sosa, Angelo David, Ralsal Castro, Gherome Ejercito, Rainier Sison and Rob Johnson. *Musang A. Castillo*

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76ers nip Knicks on buzzer-beater

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson made a nifty pass to Marc Jackson for the winning layup with a second left, and the Philadelphia 76ers moved back to .500 and into a tie for first place in the Atlantic Division with a 106-105 victory over the New York Knicks on Monday night.

The Knicks had one last chance, but Nazir Mohammed's shot was off the mark and they lost for the eighth time in 10 games.

Iverson followed his career-high 60-point game against Orlando on Saturday night with 38 points against New York. He also added 10 assists. Jackson finished with 22 points on 10-for-14 shooting.

Stephon Marbury led the Knicks with 32 points.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Nick Van Exel hit a 29-foot desperation heave at the buzzer to give Portland a win over Charlotte.

It was the seventh consecutive loss for the Bobcats—and the second in a row on a 3 at

the buzzer. On Sunday, Tim Thomas got a friendly roll on a 3-pointer to give New York a 102-99 victory.

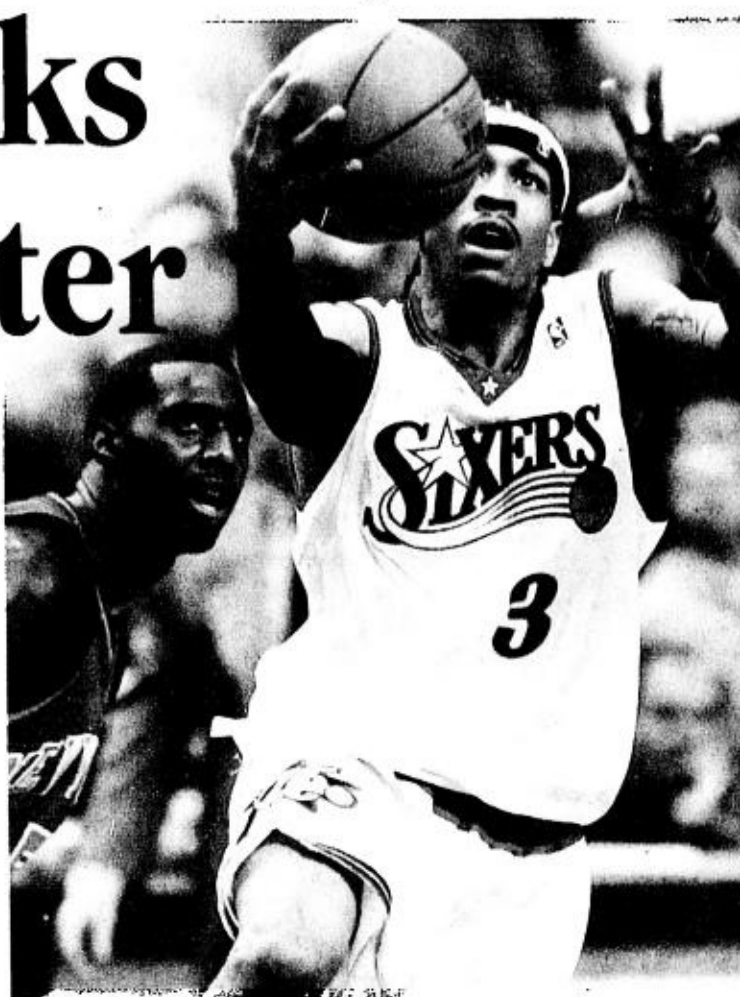
Joel Przybilla scored a career-high 19 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for the Blazers, who ended a three-game losing streak. They won despite playing without leading scorer and rebounder Zach Randolph (right knee).

Jason Kapono hit a 3-pointer with 9 seconds left to tie the game.

Charlotte played without leading scorer and rebounder Emeka Okafor, who sat out with a sprained left ankle. Starting point guard Brevin Knight was out with a sprained right ankle.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rasheed Wallace had 17 points and 10 rebounds, leading Detroit to a rout of Milwaukee.

AP
COMPLETE RESULTS: Philadelphia 106, NY Knicks 105; Portland 80, Charlotte 77; Detroit 107, Milwaukee 83; New Orleans 98, Washington 96; Phoenix 136, Utah 128.



SIXERS' Iverson (3) drives past Knicks' Tim Thomas.

Viado enters round of 16

TARLAC'S Carlos Viado stunned Gandy Valle of Davao City, 7-6, yesterday to make the last 16 of the Hope P1-Million All-Filipino Billiards Open at the Bowling Inn and Billiards Center on Taft Avenue, Manila.

The 21-year-old Viado, a native of Moncada, thus became the youngest qualifier in the event serving as one of the eliminators for players vying for slots in the national team for this year's Manila Southeast Asian Games.

He will join seeded players Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, reigning world pool champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan, Warren Kiamco, Marlon Manalo, Lee Van Cortez, Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Leonardo Andam in the last 16 starting Feb. 21.

The top finisher in the last 16 outside of Reyes, Bustamante and Cortez will also qualify for the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour.

Viado earlier beat Fidel Punzalan, 7-3.

As impressive was old warrior Roberto Dy. Dy, well past 60 and the last active local player from his generation, stunned top seed Antonio "Nickoy" Lining, 7-2, to qualify along with Antonio "Ga-Ga" Gabica of Lapu-Lapu City and Edgar Acaba of Malabon.

Marlon Bernardino

SK teener stretches lead to 3

LIPA CITY—South Korean teenager Kim Chang-hoi overcame a struggling start to salvage a two-over-par 74 yesterday and widen his lead to three strokes going into the final round of the Samsung Amateur Tour grand finals here.



KIM: Bad front nine

The 18-year-old Kim bogeyed three of the first seven holes but played the remaining holes at one-under to move on the brink of victory with a 215 aggregate, one under par at the challenging Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course.

As national amateur champion Jun Bernis shot himself in the foot with a 79, Boyet Saragoza took the day's scoring honors with a two-under 70 and looked the only player capable of spoiling Kim's quest.

Saragoza posted nines of 36-34, breaking par for the second time in three days, to be in solo second at 218.

Jay Bayron moved up to third at 220 following a 76, just a stroke ahead of Bernis, while Raymund Sangil was stuck at the cellar despite a 74-227.

The tournament organized by the Professional Sports Management Group is the culmination of a nationwide series played in seven of the country's finest golf clubs.

Two other qualifiers, the multititled Juvic Pagunsan and Eric Deen of Cebu, begged off due to previous commitments.

Bernis opened his round with a double-bogey and was already six over by the time he reached the fifth hole which he birdied.

Hitting 39 after nine holes, Kim birdied the 10th, 14th and 18th against bogeys on the 13th and 16th for a 35 coming in.

Saragoza stood seven strokes behind Kim after a 77 in second round Monday. He cut the deficit to four after the front nine, and stood just two behind when Kim bogeyed the 13th.

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FOR many years, the residents of Caloocan have been living in the dark, uncertain of their future as a people and a city. Waking up each morning unsure what the day would bring them, where they will go and whom to ask for help. A limbo of hopelessness cover them, development and progress seemed to be far-fetched.

The scenario for the residents of Caloocan changed when the representative of the 1st district of the city, lawyer Enrico "RECOM" Echiverri ran for the mayoralty post and won a landslide victory. Echiverri promised reform not only in the city but also in the very lives of his constituents.

After 43 years of being a city, Caloocan has so much to celebrate, with the new leadership to follow and emulate, new prospects to look forward to, new vision to fulfill, new mission to accomplish. Like the man who

last August 31 to consolidate the efforts of cities, municipalities and the national government agencies in resolving the problem in the northern part of northern Metro Manila including flood, waste management and traffic.

The city police was able to neutralize at least 60% of the drug problem through the continued anti-drug operations, arrests and surveillance, and cooperation with different sectors of society.

The city is also now implementing curfew to keep the young people at their homes instead of hanging around with gangs which only result to street brawls.

Health and Housing

The newly-constructed President Diosdado Macapagal Memorial Medical Center, formerly Caloocan City General Hospital, is now fully operational. Charity

and measles vaccination; live birth and late registration services; family planning program; free haircut services and free anti-rabies vaccination for dogs.

The city is now waiting for the implementation of Mobile Alarm and RECOM System (MARS), a highly advanced computerized equipment which can receive data from text messages and which will effectively mobilize the police crime-busters, fire marshals, barangay officials and other concerned agencies.

Reformed and Sane City

The mayor also ordered the continuous conduct of reformation operations to clean the city of vices and to protect street children from syndicates.

And, for the first time since the May elections that almost divide the city, the high-ranking officials of Caloocan come together to support the plans laid by the City Development Council (CDC) after Echiverri, Vice Mayor Luis "Tito" Valera, Rep. Oscar "Oca" Malapitan of the 1st District, and Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio of the 2nd District, attended the general assembly.

Echiverri said the unity of the leaders of the local government is a positive indication that the programs and projects laid by CDC for the development of Caloocan and its residents would be implemented.

Believing that a strong family symbolizes a strong and unified society, and the foundation of the family will be stronger if the couple ex-

of 400 tinigges illegally operating at the Ever Gotesco Grand Central. The owners were able to reopen their business and paid their dues to the city.

Also, he ordered that the city pay only those contractors who regularly pay their taxes.



Despite belonging to opposing political parties, Mayor Echiverri was able to convince President Arroyo to help in the city's pro-

has been awakened from a long slumber and realizes that it is never too late to start his life anew, the city is now ready to unleash its long-untapped potential.

Mayor Enrico "RECOM" Echiverri, the man whom the Caloocan residents put their hope and trusted to uplift their lives and help them build a premier city, has taken up the challenge to reform the city through quality governance that will generate jobs, put additional schools, build roads and bridges, maintain peace and order, and more importantly, an improved quality of life for all the residents of the city.

He promised the people that he would lead them with a government with a heart, a government with a conscience, and a government that is sensitive and responsive to the people's needs.

To enable him to organize his priorities and fulfill his programs, he used the letters of his surname to guide him. Echiverri was successful in doing so as he was able to cultivate and tackle every aspect of the city that needed the much-sought reform.

Education- Echiverri aimed for the culture of academic excellence in Caloocan in recognition of the role played by the youth in nation-building. He ordered the release of P200 million funds for the construction of additional school buildings and acquisition of land for the expansion of schools.

The first to be constructed is the four-storey, 16-classroom Maypajo High School in the compound of Maypajo Elementary School. A building for Kasarinlan High School will also be constructed.

Plans are also underway for the construction of the Caloocan Premier University along EDSA. Another university to cater students from Caloocan North is being planned. Echiverri wanted Caloocan residents to be studying near their residences so that they can focus more on their studies instead of spending their time traveling to and from school.

In the near future, students need not go to Manila to explore the wonders of the planets and other heavenly bodies because the city will build its own planetarium right in the heart of its education institution.

While, another P20 million was earmarked for the acquisition of more desks, chairs and books for distribution to various schools. The city government also earmarked P5 million for RECOM-McDonald



The re-opening of the Monumento Circle to motorists by Mayor Re-com Echiverri eased the traffic situation not only in Caloocan but also to nearby cities and provinces.

of Echiverri to attain a society that provides decent lives to everyone through decent housing.

A Socialized Housing project is likewise underway, as the city government is presently coordinating with the National Housing Authority for the government employees, teachers and law enforcers. The city is also working hand in hand with the Couples for Christ in the Gawad Kalinga housing project. The city is also coordinating with the Habitat Community.

Infrastructure and Utilities

RECOM has allocated P500 million to fund the ongoing road construction and drainage rehabilitation in various areas of the city to take advantage of Caloocan's strategic location being the gateway of Metro Manila to Luzon.

He has also ordered the construction of vocational training schools in Bagong Barrio and in the area of the city's 2nd district and putting up of several public markets and slaughter houses.

A clamshell tent like that in Intramuros will also be constructed in District 1 to serve as a venue for socio-cultural activities which will showcase the rich traditions of the city. Also to properly demarcate the boundaries of the Caloocan and Quezon City, a grand boundary marker will be built along EDSA.

Nine overhead water tanks will also be put up to address the lack of water supply in Bagong Silang. Echiverri also plans to rehabilitate the Dagat-dagatan water system.

Echiverri also ordered the lighting of all the streets and alleys in the city to protect the people and prevent criminals from victimizing unsuspecting residents.

Very Efficient Governance and Honest Public Service

To discourage city hall employees from resorting to extra income generation which commonly result to their involvement to graft and corruption, Echiverri ordered the release of the long-delayed salary of the city hall employees, including their mid-year bonus and cash gifts, amounting to P50.4 million as he ordered a stop to the practice of employees selling their salaries to paymasters.

Echiverri said now there is no need for the employees to sell their salaries as they are getting it on time. He also settled the remittance of the employees' premiums with the Government Service Insurance System.

Even the delayed allowances of the staff of Dr. Jose Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, formerly Tala Leprosarium, and job order employees for the month of June were also released.

He also ordered the streamlining of the process in the city hall and the printing and posting of the transaction process so that people would no longer need the help of "fixers" to hasten the transaction.

Empowerment of the people

Echiverri also opened his office to the public, who wanted to have audience with him, entertaining them until midnight.

Also, to personally see, hear and feel the pulse and need of the people, he initiated Pulong Barangay which was launched last September 30 at Zone 3, Maypajo area where nine barangays participated and the residents benefited from free medical services, medicines

and marriage vows before God.

RECOM organized two Kasalang Bayan during his birthday where he served as the primary sponsor to 1,150 couples.

A family day was also organized to foster the welfare and solidarity among the city government officials and their families.

Revitalized City

Echiverri worked to improve the conditions of the business centers at the growth areas in the city particularly EDSA, Rizal Avenue extension, 10th Avenue, C-3 Road, MH del Pilar, Zapote Road and Zabarte Road as he believe the growth centers will spawn greater business opportunities for the mutual benefit of both capital and labor.

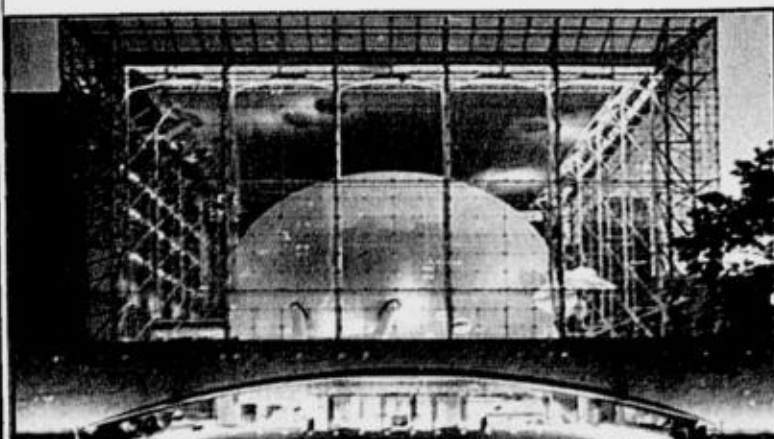
On the other hand, the mayor opposed the plan to extend the operations of Metro Railways Transit (MRT) from North Avenue to Monumento as it would adversely affect the development plan being implemented by the city and eventually kill the business establishments along EDSA and would virtually divide the city as residents of Bagong Barrio would have a hard time going to the Biglang-Awa side and vice-versa.

Investment-Friendly

In order to finance all the projects and programs he is planning for the city, the mayor strived hard to make the city investment-friendly, that is why he is consulting the members of the business community including the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Rotarians and the Lion's Club whose collaboration remains critical in establishing a robust economy in the city.

He also forged a public-private partnership that will help ensure a healthy and profitable business climate.

On the other hand, Echiverri remains firm not tolerate illegal business operations in the city as it deprived Caloocan the much-needed revenue. He ordered the closure



The proposed planetarium is Mayor Echiverri's gift to the Caloocan students and youth.

Book Project which will be the answer to the lack of teaching tools and aids for teachers.

Clean, Orderly and Safe City

Before, motorists purposely avoided Caloocan because of traffic, garbage and crimes. Today, motorists and commuters purposely drove to the city as they have noticed the big difference in Caloocan.

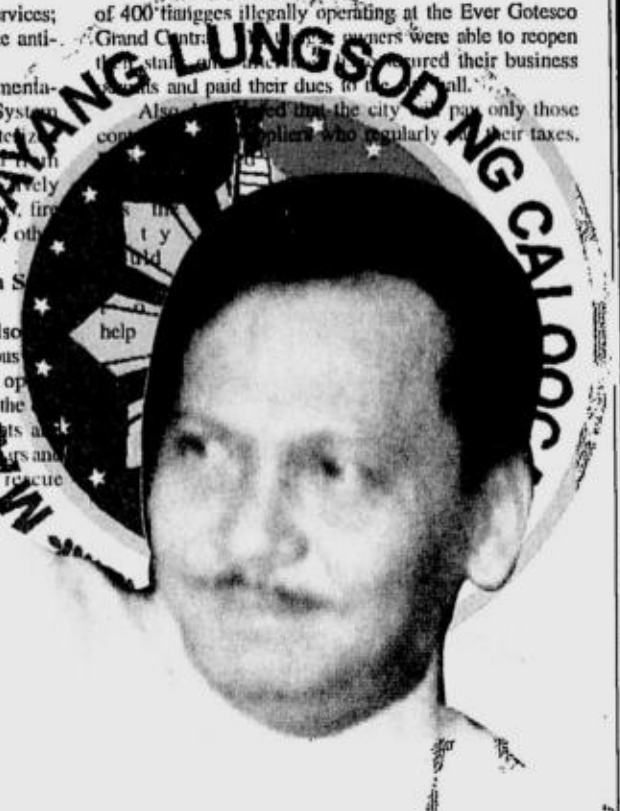
One of the big changes is the dismantling of the railings put up at the Monumento Circle which blocked the traffic coming from Manila to Valenzuela. Echiverri opened the Monumento Circle to motorists again on his first day in office, the minute after he has taken his oath as the new mayor of the city. The mayor created Monumento Peace and Order Council to ensure the smooth flow of traffic in the area.

He also terminated the contract of Jadewell Parking Systems with the city because instead of giving relief to traffic woes, it has only become a problem not only to the motorists but commuters as well.

The city is now striving to be garbage-free. RECOM has directed all garbage contractors to shape up or ship out as he warned that he will cancel their contract if they will fail in their obligations.

More than 20, 000 meters of creeks and canals in the city have been covered with the regular clean-up drive and Oplan Linis Estero to lessen the city's flood problem.

Recom has also initiated the successful Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela Summit



the Bureau of Internal Revenue collect exact taxes from the business sector.

The mayor does not only think of the welfare of the business owners but the residents as well as he initiated two job fairs last October and November which has provided some 8,500 jobs for Caloocan residents. Officials from the Department of Labor and Employment adjudged the job fair as the largest held in Metro Manila.

Staying true to his promise to the 1.8 million residents of Caloocan who have given him fresh mandate to run the city when they supported and voted for him during the last elections, lawyer RECOM Echiverri will never stop until he has seen that the city and the residents have fully realized and developed their potentials and use them for the further development of the city.

But to Mayor Echiverri, many things must still be done, many programs to implement and projects to initiate. He believed that what he has done were not enough and many more things should be accomplished before he could claim that he had reformed the beloved city.

In the end, the mayor appealed for the help and support of the city residents as he knows that he would accomplish nothing without them.



SEAG venues inspection set this week

THE LEGWORK begins for the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee.

Starting this week, chair Roberto Pagdangan will lead his team in inspecting the SEA Games venues outside Metro Manila.

Bacolod, which will host boxing, men's football, volleyball and weightlifting, will be the Philsoc team's first stop.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella has requested a P50 million financial assistance from the national government for the rehabilitation of the Paglaum and Panaad sports facilities.

Cebu City, meanwhile, has created an organizing committee that will raise about P10 million from corporate sponsors.

Cebu will host judo, karate, mountain bike, sepak takraw, pencak silat and dance sport.

Golf will be played in Cavite, while triathlon, swimming and archery will be held in Subic.

Jasmine W. Payo

La Salle-Zobel hosts t'wondo, football meets

DE LA Salle-Zobel plays host to a sporting weekend with the holding of the 2nd DLSZ Football Fiesta on Feb. 19-20 and the 3rd DLSZ Taekwondo Championships on Feb. 20 on the school campus at Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Organized by the De La Salle Zobel Parents Association Sports Development Foundation headed by chair Cathy Rivilla and held in coordination with the school's Sports Development Office and the First Gentleman Foundation, the tournaments will be joined in by school and club teams from Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Ronald Holmes, DLSZ executive vice president, and SDO head Moises Lozada are encouraging athletes to join the competitions sponsored by Coca-Cola, Purefoods and Jollibee Alabang.

Rivilla is joined by Luigi Lacson and Liza Elorde as overall coordinators in football while Pat Ruiz Luzuriaga and Ricky Santiago are in charge of taekwondo.

More than 60 teams have signed up for the football fiesta featuring competitions in nine boys' and girls' age groups.

The taekwondo meet has lured at least 33 teams and 500 players.

For cagebelle Kathryn Tan, impossible is nothing

By Ted S. Melendres

DALLAS, Texas—For two long minutes, a lissom Filipina cagebelle kept the small courtside gallery on tenterhooks with her devil-may-care sallies.

Lithe for one with a single working arm, 18-year-old Kathryn Grace Tan crisscrossed the court like a clever mouse teasing a big cat.

Never mind if the big cat was crack Dallas Mavericks guard Jerry Stackhouse.

In those fleeting moments, and despite the intimidating presence up close of the 6-foot-6 Stackhouse, Kathryn put up the basketball four times, each time scoring and each time drawing loud oohs from the gallery that included NBA all-star rookie Devin Harris of the Mavs.

Stackhouse could only shake his clean-shaven pate in awe.

"I was impressed, she's great!" he gushed after the pick-up game one bitingly cold late afternoon at the YMCA gym here recently.

"I'm pleasantly surprised," added Stackhouse. "She's able to take the ball to where she wanted it, her spirit is good, she's happy and she's smiling. She's an inspiration to me."

Remember Kathryn?

She's the athletically gifted only child of construction executive Rubin and Virginia Tan of Posadas Village, Muntinlupa, who lost her left arm in a much-publicized school fair mishap when she was barely 10.

Her inspiring story of perseverance and courage in the sport closest to her heart, according to adidas Philippines marketing director Angelica Suiz, fits the brand's "Impossible is Nothing" challenge to a T.

Now a Multimedia Arts freshman at St. Benilde College, Kathryn took her basketball to Dallas courtesy of adidas Phils. and its co-presenter Globe Gen-



ALL TEED UP: Kathryn sets up her first play off crack Dallas Mavericks guard Jerry Stackhouse who later heaps praises on the teener from Muntinlupa.

txt as her prize for winning the search.

"Kathryn proved to all that physical limitation is not a reason to stop pursuing their dreams, but is a challenge to leap beyond greater heights," read the congratulatory message sent her by adidas Phils.

Kathryn's left arm was amputated after the accident in 1996 at De La Salle Zobel. The bubbly girl fell off a "caterpillar" ride that went haywire.

But that did not shatter her dream of playing competitively.

Home at last on Christmas eve, a month after the accident, Kathryn's only wish was to see a hoop outside their home. Before midnight, she got her porta-hoop, thanks to her doting dad.

A year later, Kathryn made it to the DLS-Z squad in the Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA), where she acquitted herself well. She would play for the team for seven years, her final season as co-captain.

Kathryn's talent and big fighting

heart stood out in Dallas as she joined the winners of the adidas Asian Streetball Challenge from South Korea and Taiwan. The Koreans pipped a Filipino trio from Davao in the finals of the boys' competition.

In that happy pick-up game, Kathryn was paired with Harris while Stackhouse, an adidas endorser like his Mavs pal, teamed up with her dad.

"Sobrang indescribable," Kathryn said afterwards, her eyes glowing with immeasurable joy. "It's more than a dream come true for me."

As Kathryn's prize from Stackhouse and Harris, the NBA stars invited her to dinner, and the three rode to the restaurant aboard a 16-meter stretch limousine.

It took Kathryn Tan two minutes to outdo herself. For the 30 awestruck souls or so inside that cold Dallas gym last week, her audacious courage was a fire of inspiration that, no doubt, will forever burn in their hearts.

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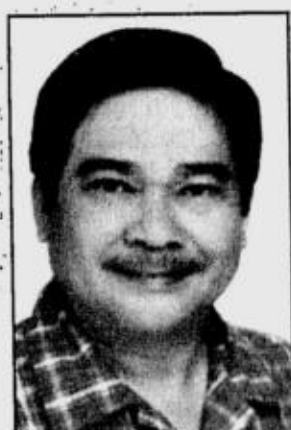


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SUPT. ALEJANDRO ALMACEN - City Jail Warden



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Secretary to the Mayor



REP. OSCAR MALAPITAN
Congressman 1ST Dist.



ATTY. ENRICO
"RECOM" ECHIVERRI
City Mayor



REP. LUIS ASISTIO
Congressman 2ND Dist.



ATTY. ROMEO LL.
ALCANTARA JR.
City Administrator

1ST DISTRICT COUNCILORS:



HON. GUALBERTO BACOLOD



HON. MELINDA MABAGOS



LUIS "TITO" Y. VARELA
City Vice-Mayor



HON. MITCH CAJAYON



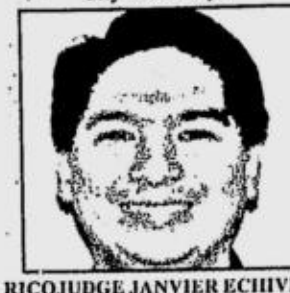
HON. ERNESTO CUNANAN



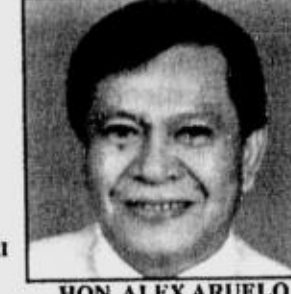
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HON. DANTE PRADO



RIKOJUDGE JANVIER ECHIVERRI
Liga ng mga Brgy. Pres.



HON. ALEX ARUELO



HON. ROSE MERCADO



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1 CONSTANTINE	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 CONSTANTINE	1 CONSTANTINE
2 SIDEWAYS	2 CONSTANTINE	2 SIDEWAYS	2 CONSTANTINE	2 WITHOUT A PADDLE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 5 CHILDREN AND IT	3 CONSTANTINE	3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	3 ALEX & EMMA
4 DREAMBOY	4 DREAMBOY	4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	4 RAY	4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA		5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	5 SIDEWAYS	5

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2 CONSTANTINE	7 DREAMBOY
3 RAY	8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 5 CHILDREN AND IT	9 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	10 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

ERMITA

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1 CONSTANTINE	5 SIDEWAYS
2 A5 CHILDREN AND IT	6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	7 CONSTANTINE
4 RAY	

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2 SIDEWAYS	6 DREAMBOY
3 BATH HOUSE	7 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 5 CHILDREN AND IT	8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

NOVALICHES

935-3229/31

1 CONSTANTINE	5 DREAMBOY
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	6 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	7 SHALL WE DANCE
4 ELEKTRA	8 5 CHILDREN AND IT

PIONEER

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1 CONSTANTINE	3 5 CHILDREN AND IT
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

CITISQUARE MALABON

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CAINTA

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1 ELEKTRA	1 CONSTANTINE
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3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 DREAMBOY	4 DREAMBOY

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4 ELEKTRA	4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 DREAMBOY	5 DREAMBOY

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4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13	4 RACING STRIPES
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	

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3 ELEKTRA	3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 RACING STRIPES	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 DREAMBOY	5 CONSTANTINE
6 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	6 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

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1 CONSTANTINE	1 CONSTANTINE
2 MEET THE FOCKERS	2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 DREAMBOY	3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 RACING STRIPES	5 DREAMBOY
6 SHALL WE DANCE	6 SHALL WE DANCE



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A30

Football qualifier kicks off

THE QUALIFYING round for South East Luzon of the 2005 PFF-adidas National Men's Championship kicks off today in Daet City, Camarines Norte. The Group B qualifiers will last up to Feb. 20 at the Eco Athletic Field.

Selections from Legaspi City (Albay), Masbate, Naga City (Camarines Sur), Quezon and Camarines Norte will see action, with the top team advancing to the National Finals from March 6-11 in Cagayan de Oro City.

Today's opening ceremonies will be graced by Gov. Jesus O. Typoco, Rep. Renato J. Unico, Mayor Elmer E. Panotes and officers of the Camarines Norte Football Association.

The 2005 PFF-adidas National Men's Championship is backed by sponsors-partners of the Philippine Football Federation like Red Ribbon Bakeshop, Petron and SuperFerry.

SPORTS WATCH

Noche wins

WHIZ Anthony Noche of Lourdes School of Mandaluyong beat John Neil Alarcos Sunday in the sixth and final round to rule the junior division in the final evaluation tournament of the 2005 Milo Checkmate Saturday and Sunday-only clinic at J & F Divino Bldg. in Quezon City. Noche, 14, wound up with a perfect 6.0 points to cop the junior title in the age-group competition. Might Noche, also of LSM and Whiz's 11-year-old brother, topped the Under 12 bracket with 5 points.

Derby today

FILIPINO Cockers & Breeders Association members continue their battle for the FIL-COBA Cocker of the Year tonight at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. Leaders of the derby, sponsored by Thunderbird Bexan-XP & Thunderbird Multi-Grain Concentrate & Conditioner, are Col. Tabique (Joy-Joy) and Nelson Uy (NU Red Hawk) with six points each. Expected to bounce back are Rep. Pong Plaza and Australian Peter Uren.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA

BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Speed Majesty

2. Plaridel Hero

3. Bronte

Race 2—1. Diva/Collective

Dreams 2. Material

Trick 3. Santa Fe

4. Moore Mag-

ic/Manillaño

Race 3—1. College

Gem/Cool Reception

2. Mercurian 3. Shut-

tler 4. Shaolin

Race 4—1. Dainty 2. Noble

House 3. Road Run-

ner 4. Wild Orphan

Race 5—1. Bunker Buster

2. The Magician 3. Jay

Nicole 4. Sweet Talk

5. Aya's Star

Race 6—1. Pullian Beauty

2. Carolina Belle

3. Sagittarius 4. All

Powerful

Race 7—1. King Poppy

2. Perky Perp

3. Schwarzenegger

4. My Lucky One

5. Real Triumph

Race 8—1. Latshaveaparty

2. Fibe Offer 3. Bashful

Lady 4. Royal Rose

5. Red Thunder

6. Sham Sham

closeup

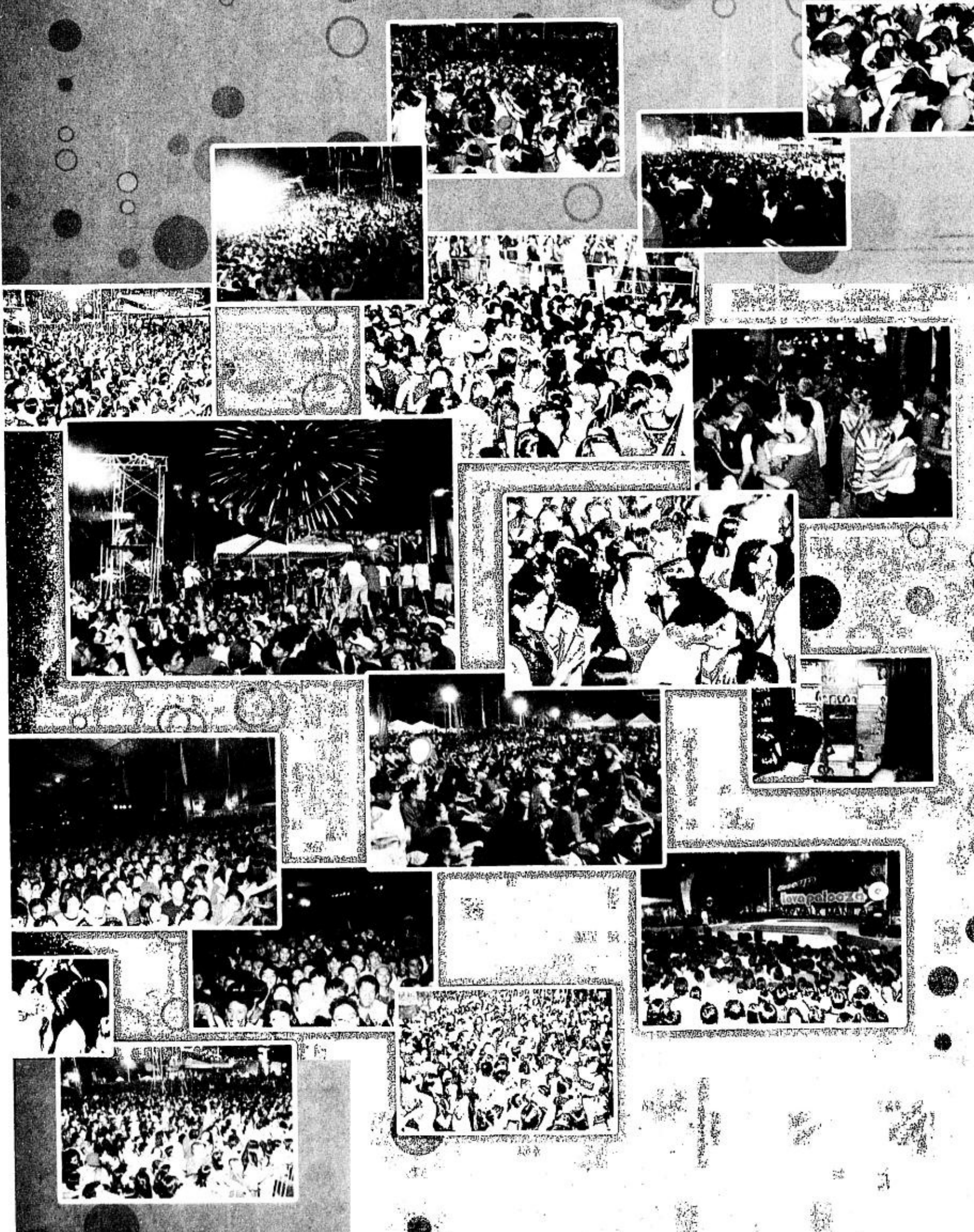
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streets? The fireworks and
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of midnight?

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and friends who kissed and
partied at the Lovapalooza 2
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A 32

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THIRD WEEK

"Action-packed! Strong performances!"

It gets a grip on the audience early and never lets go... -Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN TIMES

"Emotionally compelling, visually stunning, superbly acted."

-Harper Barnes, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

"Spiked with nerve-jangling energy."

-Robert Denerstein, ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

"AP13' is a gritty, fast-paced action film!"

-Jack Garner, ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT

"Ethan's best action flick since 'Training Day.' It's Laurence's best role by far since the original 'Matrix'"

-Tom Long, THE DETROIT NEWS

"Matrix' Laurence Fishburne is brilliantly ruthless."

-MAXIM MAGAZINE

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LAURENCE FISHBURNE
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PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will be allowed
\$85M SUPER PRODUCTION FROM WARNER BROS.
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All I Ask Of You

NO MORE TALK OF DARKNESS:
FORGET THESE WIDE-EYED FEARS.
I'M HERE, WITH YOU, BESIDE YOU --
MY WORDS WILL WARM AND CALM YOU.

LET ME BE YOUR FREEDOM,
LET DAYLIGHT DRY YOUR TEARS.
I'M HERE, WITH YOU, BESIDE YOU,
TO GUARD YOU AND TO GUIDE YOU...

SAY YOU LOVE ME
EVERY WAKING MOMENT,
TURN MY HEAD WITH
TALK OF SUMMERTIME...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU,
NOW AND ALWAYS...
PROMISE ME THAT ALL YOU SAY IS TRUE --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

LET ME BE YOUR SHELTER,
LET ME BE YOUR LIGHT.
YOU'RE SAFE, NO-ONE WILL FIND YOU --
YOUR FEARS ARE FAR BEHIND YOU...

ALL I WANT IS FREEDOM,
A WORLD WITH NO MORE NIGHT...
AND YOU, ALWAYS BESIDE ME,
TO HOLD ME AND TO HIDE ME...

THEN SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME
ONE LOVE, ONE LIFETIME...
LET ME LEAD YOU
FROM YOUR SOLITUDE...

SAY YOU NEED ME WITH YOU HERE,
BESIDE YOU...
ANYWHERE YOU GO, LET ME GO TOO --
CHRISTINE, THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

SAY YOU'LL SHARE WITH ME ONE LOVE,
ONE LIFETIME...
SAY THE WORD
AND I WILL FOLLOW YOU...

SHARE EACH DAY WITH ME,
EACH NIGHT, EACH MORNING...

SAY YOU LOVE ME...
YOU KNOW I DO...
LOVE ME --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

ANYWHERE YOU GO
LET ME GO TOO...
LOVE ME --
THAT'S ALL I ASK OF YOU...

Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber
Lyrics: Charles Hart
Additional Lyrics: Richard Stilgou
Based on the novel by Gaston Leroux

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3 GOLDEN GLOBE
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BEST ACTRESS
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classic tale of terror,
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people worldwide,
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for the first time.

'SIDEWAYS' IS THE BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR!

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NOMINATIONS including
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WINNER
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SIDEWAYS

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTION AND ABOUT SCHMIDT

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES PRESENTS A MICHAEL LONDON PRODUCTION "SIDEWAYS" PAUL GIAMATTI THOMAS HADEN CHURCH
VICTORIA BAILEY SANDRA DE VITO ROBERT KNEPP -- JESSICA BASTONE -- J. GEORGE FARRA -- JESSICA CHUCK
JOHN TURTURRO AND JANE ANNE STEWART -- JESSICA PHEOON PAPANIKOLAOU -- J. MICHAEL LONDON -- J. P. P. PICKETT
ALEXANDER PAYNE & JON TAYLOR -- ALEXANDER PAYNE

GRAND OPENING TODAY

MT RCB PG-13
RESTRICTED
No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted
Strictly for Adults

GRAND OPENING TODAY

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THE WAGER BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL IS ON EARTH

KEVIN REEVES
CONSTANTINE

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Ramon Salvador says Decena is lying

By Marinel R. Cruz

"SHE'S LYING."

Ramon Salvador said his brother, actor Phillip Salvador never offered to settle out of court with his former girlfriend, businesswoman Cristina Castillo-Decena.

Decena, who has filed three estafa cases against the brothers, told INQUIRER Entertainment last week that Phillip was willing to give her the condominium unit he used to share with actress Kris Aquino, plus P5 million, if she (Decena) withdrew the cases.

"She's good at making [up] stories," Ramon said of Decena. "Phillip never said that." He warned the businesswoman about "the return of karma," especially on one's family. He did not elaborate.

In a resolution dated Feb. 2, 2005, the Las Piñas City Prosecutor's Office recommended the filing of estafa charges against the Salvador brothers.

The cases were in connection with 10 jeepneys that Decena bought in December 2001, for management by Ramon, and a company she helped put up in Hong Kong with the brothers, the Phillip Salvador Freight and Remittance International Ltd.

In the very first case she filed with the Department of Justice, Decena demanded the payment of P15 million which she claimed, she lent Phillip more than two years ago.

The DOJ referred the case to the Makati City Prosecutor's Office, which also recommended the filing of estafa charges against Phillip. The actor denied owing Decena any money.

"She filed the [other] two cases in Las Piñas and won, even if she had no valid evidence [against us]. I was expecting that," Ramon told the INQUIRER Entertainment on Sunday. "She knows a lot of people there. One of her lawyers used to work there as clerk of court."

The resolution signed by Las Piñas Prosecutor II Marilyn Cynthia Patima Madamba-Lu-ang, stated that the Salvadors "conspired" to deceive Decena when they convinced her to



RAMON (left) denies that Phillip is trying to settle out of court.

'She's good at making up stories ... my brother has never been to Macau ... I've never set foot in her mother's house'

put up the Hong Kong business.

The freight and remittance company was formally registered on Dec. 27, 2001. Decena and Ramon were its shareholders/directors.

Decena said she gave Phillip P5 million for the business, but that actor squandered the money by frequenting casinos and horse races in Macau.

"My brother has never been to Macau," Ramon pointed out. "[Anyone can] check Phillip's passport. I went with her to Hong Kong because she asked me to. She also asked me to sign the documents so that the business could start operating."

In another resolution, Las Piñas Prosecutor II Teresita N. Cativo said the Salvadors "falsely assured" Decena that she could earn up to P6,000 a day from the 10 second-hand jeepneys. Decena

na claimed she never saw her earnings.

"She's a liar," Ramon said. "She told me she had filed that case only because she was angry with Phillip. *Nadamay lang daw ako* (My involvement was inadvertent). She said that in front of [show biz writer and talk show host] Cristy Fermin."

Fermin had submitted an affidavit and was willing to testify in court, he added.

"God knows ... I'm not guilty of anything. [Decena] even told people that I called her up and cursed her after [last week's] resolution came out. How could I do that? I don't even know her number," Ramon stressed. "She also said she gave money to Phillip and me at her mother's house in Las Piñas. I've never set foot in her mother's house. I don't even know where that is."

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- ⑦ The Phantom of the Opera

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM
ABS-CBN 2		Value Vision	Value Vision
NBN		Value Vision	Value Vision
ABC 5			Problems Nya, Sayo Ma Joyda
GMA 7		Sayang Sukit Ng Langit	
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	
IBC 13			Lifestyle
Solar		Wwe Heat	
Nickelodeon		Blues Clues	Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	Fairly Odd Parents
ETC		Knock First	30K
Cinema One		Turkdog	
Studio 23			
AXN		Fear Factor (Season IV)	
Star World		The Bold & the Beautiful	
CNN			
National Geographic			
Solar Sports		IBF Korea Open VS	
Lifestyle Network		Country Style	Intensions By Design
HBO			Decorating With Style
Star Movies			Abandon (3:45 PM)
Cartoon Network		Scoby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show
ESPN			Motorsport Asia
Disney Channel		Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies
Cinemax		Cinema Secrets III Ep 13 Hanging By A Thread	Tarzan's Fight For His Life (3:15 PM)
Hallmark Channel		Mad About You	Claymore Part I
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries	
MTV Philippines			Hangin' Out of MTV
Sports Plus			
EWTH		Council Of Fadi	Angus (3:15 PM)

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY

10 pm after Big News



ClickTheCity.com

Channel	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Showbiz No. 1	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision
NBN	Showbiz No. 1	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision	Value Vision
ABC 5	PBA Game-Bol	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA	PBA
GMA 7	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Stam Dunk	24 Oras	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge	Extra Challenge
RPN 9	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	WWE Confidential	SpongeBob SquarePants	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX
IBC 13	EZ Shop	As Told By Ginger	WWE Confidential	SpongeBob SquarePants	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX
Solar	WWE Confidential	SpongeBob SquarePants	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX	OPM MYX
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K
MYX	Urban MYX	Knock First	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K
ETC	Knock First	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K	30K
Cinema One	Turkdog															
Studio 23																
AXN	Fear Factor (Season IV)															
Star World	The Bold & the Beautiful															
CNN																
National Geographic																
Solar Sports	IBF Korea Open VS															
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Intensions By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Stamps Of Fire (4:05 PM)	Tom & Jerry Show	Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wuzzup Wuzzup	Mr. Bean	C.S.I.	Angel	News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show	Friends	American Idol
HBO																
Star Movies																
Cartoon Network	Scoby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show														
ESPN																
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unikitty Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Kim Possible
Cinemax	Cinema Secrets III Ep 13 Hanging By A Thread	Tarzan's Fight For His Life (3:15 PM)	Claymore Part I													
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You															
Discovery Channel	Science Mysteries															
MTV Philippines																
Sports Plus																
EWTH	Council Of Fadi	Angus (3:15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angela and the Nuns of Our Lady of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millennium	The Virtues	EWTH Gallery	Maday Angkles Live Classics	One In Their Hands	Pope Plus XII	Daily Mass	St. Catherine Of Siena	Our Father's Plan	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

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TUWING HUWEBES
pagkatapos ng American Idol

Dito lang sa



FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND A. LIPIN



MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

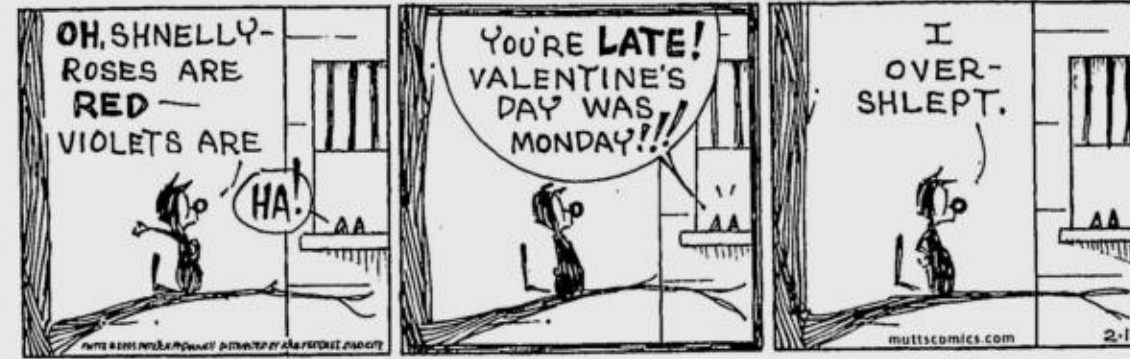


BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

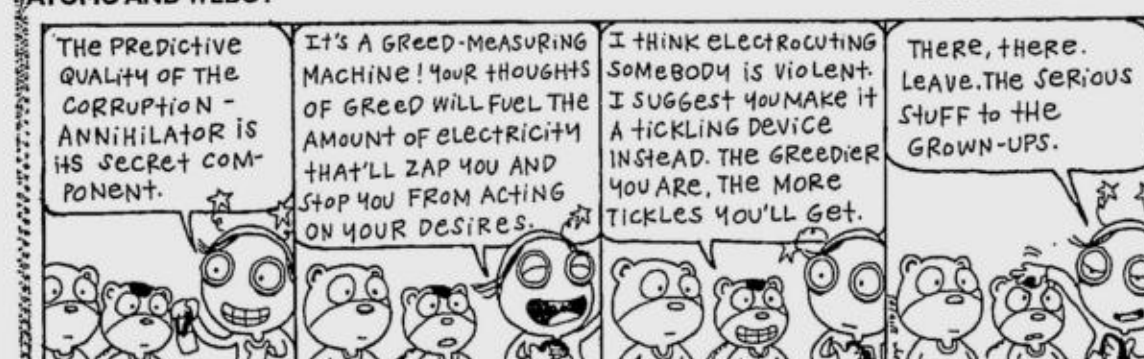


ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely sensitive to your environment and the world around you. For this reason, you must choose your colleagues with care. You're romantic and idealistic. You have humor and imagination. Even though you're an abstract thinker, you're also a dreamer. Expect increased solitude in the year ahead in order to learn something important.

Birthdate of: John McEnroe, tennis player; Ice T, musician/actor; James Ingram, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You'll feel less like communicating with others. You want to keep things to yourself. This is because you're getting more in touch with your private side.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a good time to undertake studies that could help boost your career in any way. In the month ahead, discussions with bosses are particularly significant.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Get ready for heavy-duty discussions about financial negotiations and shared property. In the next few weeks, you can cover a lot of ground in this area.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good time to start examining your ideals. Where do you want to be 10 years from now? What do you have to do now to start to make this happen?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're eager for knowledge and new experiences. You might want to study something new. Subjects related to foreign places, law, philosophy and higher knowledge appeal to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Now is the time to clarify or explain something important to someone. Discuss difficulties you're having in close relationships. Be candid. Get things out in the open.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You can get a lot of mental work done in the next few weeks. Do anything that requires careful planning and attention to detail.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Reading, writing and playing games appeal to you now. You feel prankish and teasing because you're a playful sign. (You'll play some practical jokes soon.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to withdraw somewhat. You need to avoid confrontation. You want downtime to be by yourself to stay at home, ponder and putter.

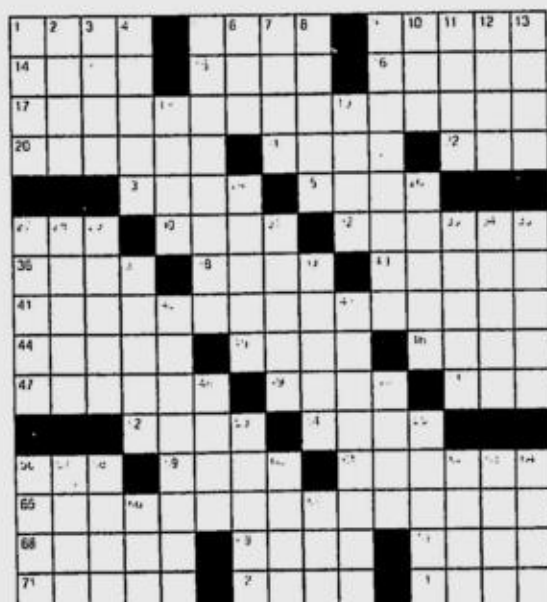
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your daily tempo intensifies in the next month. Group discussions keep you busy! Expect to meet new acquaintances. All kinds of intellectual activities intrigue you now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Now your attention turns to whatever you value in life. In addition to this, business and commercial affairs become more important. You're thinking about money and what it can buy.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today Mercury moves into your sign, giving you a strong urge to get out and travel more. It also gives you a desire to talk to others. (Great.)

DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Excited
 - Word before media or transit
 - Roam stealthily
 - Theater box
 - Stove chamber
 - Sri Lanka cash
 - Dieter's activity?
 - Chafing dish
 - fuel
 - Chi-town paper
 - Begley and Meese
 - Chicken products
 - Jason of the NFL
 - Recipe amt.
 - Love god
 - Teen
 - Upon
 - Toward shelter
 - Of the moon
 - Dieter's passion?
 - Ella or Lainie
 - Act boldly
 - Summers on the Somme
 - Wading birds
 - Short-term worker
 - Tee preceder
 - Ted or Connie
 - Enameled metalware
 - Battery size
 - Small lake
 - Newly hatched insects
 - Dieter's magic goal?
 - Very angry
 - Wallach and Whitney
 - Job safety org.
 - Used a keyboard
 - Breathly utterance
 - Golf shop buy



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

2/16/05

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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- DOWN**
- Priests' robes
 - Large blob
 - Monster
 - Literary category
 - Initial design
 - Part of GPA
 - Offshoot group
 - Trap
 - Likely but uncertain
 - Capek play
 - Mayberry boy
 - Garden pest
 - Fewer
 - "Picnic" playwright
 - Pisgic book
 - Unbroken
 - Computer critter?
 - Flat-head nails
 - Ermine in a light coat
 - Big name in investment swindles
 - French legislature
 - Form a bond
 - Nostrils
 - Apparel
 - Sacred hymn
 - Leggy bird
 - Yet to be used
 - Raze
 - Old English bard
 - Outline
 - Log joints
 - Lysergic acid source
 - Mine entrance
 - Well ventilated
 - In an NYC minute
 - Salvador the surrealist
 - Ornamental jar
 - Pain
 - Schedule figs.
 - Drowned a sub
 - Fit out

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBING



OPENING TODAY

A soul singer, a soul saver and two drinking buddies

CONSTANTINE

Distributed by Warner Bros.

Directed by Francis Lawrence

Stars: Keanu Reeves, Rachel Weisz, Max Baker



He sees dead people. And then some. John Constantine (Keanu Reeves) has the unique ability to see half-breed angels and demons that disguise themselves as humans who walk the earth. The visions drive him insane so he drinks, attempts suicide, and patrols the border between heaven and hell—also known as Los Angeles—saving people's souls. His latest task: help a police detective (Rachel Weisz) solve the mysterious death of her twin sister.

Constantine's worldwide release is on Feb. 18, so at press-time, there were still no reviews on the Net. Nevertheless, imdb.com posted this spoiler

review by Kitormitsug from the USA: "OK eye candy but it's a disgrace to the (Hellblazer) comic book... The movie is shot beautifully... like an apocalyptic version of downtown Los Angeles... Unfortunately, the script is so unfocused, it hurts what this film is trying to accomplish... A passable popcorn movie that has a better-than-deserved performance by Rachel Weisz."

SIDEWAYS

Distributor: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Directed by Alexander Payne

Starring: Paul Giamatti, Thomas Haden Church, Sandra Oh, Virginia Madsen, Marylouise Burke

Miles Faymond (Paul Giamatti), a divorced middle school teacher and failed novelist, and his altar-bound friend Jack (Thomas Haden

Church) take a wine-tasting trip in California, pondering their directions in life.

Mister Cranky gave this movie two bombs—for being consistently annoying:

"We spend two hours watching these losers, basking in the glow of the failures of Everyman. It's kind of like looking in the mirror after a really bad car accident and it's not fun at all."



CLOSER

Distributed by Columbia Pictures

Directed by Mike Nichols

Stars: Julia Roberts, Jude Law, Natalie Portman, Clive Owen

Photographer Anna (Julia Roberts) meets Dan (Jude Law), an aspiring novelist, at a photo shoot. She marries dermatologist Larry (Clive Owen). Dan dates Alice (Natalie Portman), a stripper, but has an affair with Anna. After the secret relationship is exposed, Larry and Anna begin a flirtatious friendship.

A. O. Scott, in his Dec. 3, 2004 review for The New York Times, wrote: "Like most interesting movies about sex, 'Closer,' Mike Nichols' deft film adaptation of a well-known play by Patrick Marber, is mostly talk. There are still a few filmmakers—not all of them French—who are capable of infusing the bodily expressions of erotic desire with dramatic force and psychological meaning, but the vast majority are content with a few moments of sheet-twisting and peek-a-boob montage."

RAY

Distributor: Universal Pictures

Starring: Jamie Foxx, Regina King, Kerry Washington, Richard Schiff, Aunjanue Ellis

Directed by Taylor Hackford

Musical biographical drama of American legend Ray Charles (Jamie Foxx). Born in a poor town in Georgia, Ray goes blind at the age of seven shortly after witnessing his younger brother's accidental death. Inspired by a fiercely independent mother who insists that he make his own way in the world, he finds his calling and his gift behind a piano keyboard. The movie pro-



vides a portrait of Ray's musical genius as he overcomes drug addiction and transforms himself into one of the world's most beloved performers.

Warning: This movie is two hours and 33 minutes long. Go to the CR before it starts or don't drink while watching.

Roger Ebert, in his Oct. 29, 2004 review in the Chicago Sun-Times, wrote: "Jamie Foxx suggests the complexities of Ray Charles in a great, exuberant performance. He doesn't do the singing—that's all Ray Charles on the soundtrack... What Foxx gets just right is the physical Ray Charles... (he) correctly interprets the musician's body language as a kind of choreography, in which he was conducting his music with himself, instead of with a baton. Foxx so accurately reflects my own images and memories of Charles that I abandoned thoughts of how much 'like' Charles he was and just accepted him as Charles, and got on with the story."

FIVE CHILDREN AND IT

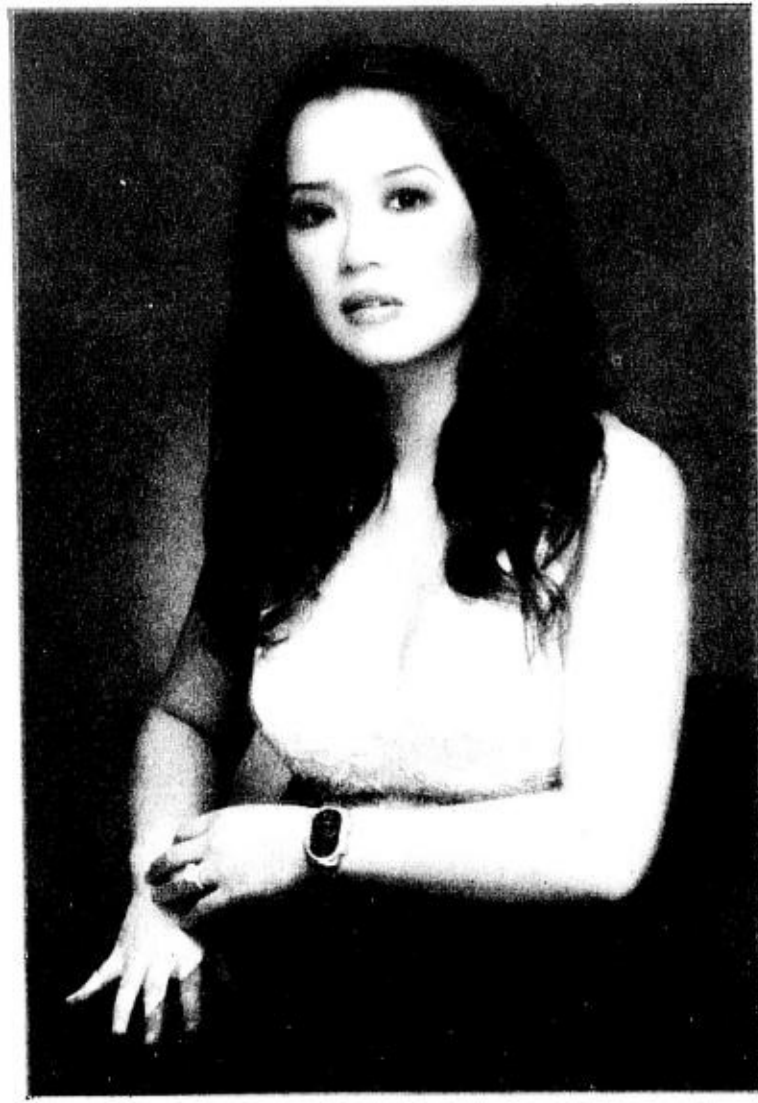
Directed by John Stephenson

Stars: Kenneth Branagh, Tara Fitzgerald, Zoë Wanamaker, Eddie Izzard

The film adaptation of E. Nesbit's 1902 classic, "It" is Psammead (voiced by Eddie Izzard), an ancient, ugly and irritable sand fairy, children find one day in a gravel pit. It grants them a wish a day, lasting until sunset. But they soon

learn it is very hard to think of really sensible wishes, and each one gets them into unexpected difficulties. Magic, the children find, can be as awkward as it is enticing.

Philip French, in his Oct. 24, 2004 review in the Guardian, wrote: "JK Rowling is a great admirer of E. Nesbit, but no child who has seen the Harry Potter films is going to be satisfied by this one."



Kris finds a new Philip

"I CAN'T say enough great things about Jun de Leon; he's truly brilliant!" says birthday (Valentine's Day) girl Kris Aquino.

She is more breathless than usual about her latest collaboration with the award-winning celebrity photographer, in large part because that was how she found her new Philip, the one now wrapped around her wrist.

It's as though she's now saying she's done wearing her heart on her sleeve. She has found her match—in style, in outlook, in discipline—in the Philip Stein TESLAR watch.

De Leon has captured the actress' unbounded excitement over her precious find. Consider the Hollywood-esque quality about these photographs. Glamour shots are seldom pulled off by amateurs and Jun de Leon is certainly no amateur; his perfectionism and attention to detail are legend. These shots illustrate his mastery of light, depth and texture.

De Leon says: "I wanted to capture the special connection between Kris and Philip Stein. It is almost of a loving nature, a connection between a woman loved and admired for her many talents and gifts, and her new object of affection."

The timepieces are bound to amaze the public with their vaunted curative effects. They are said to protect wearers from health hazards posed by electromagnetic fields given off by cellular phones, computers and other electronic devices.

"I've never had a watch like this one," Kris gushes. "I'm encouraging everybody to buy one, not just for fashion's sake, but for their health as well."

The exclusive collection is available at the Lucerne boutique, Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall.



CINEMA FOR PEACE

Hollywood couple Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins lend their hand prints as a sign of support for the "Cinema for Peace" event of the 55th International Berlin Film Festival, which opened on Sunday and runs til Feb. 20. A total of 22 films from all over the world will be screened in competition for the Bear Awards.

PINAGKAKAGULUHAN! THE NO.1 BOX OFFICE HIT!





USHER



CHRISTINA AGUILERA



NANCY WILSON



JANET Jackson and Jermaine Dupri



PENELOPE CRUZ



CYNDI LAUPER



JESSICA DRAKE

White night at the Grammys

What, no flash? The annual come-as-you-are celeb party yielded less bling and skin. Even tees-and-jeans rock stars turned up in chic casuals on Sunday

WHITE is the new black, at least in the fashion rule book of Grammy winners Alicia Keys, Usher and Kanye West.

Keys wore one of the most glamorous outfits seen at Sunday night's Grammy Awards. It was a full-length white satin gown with thick gold straps and a bare back. The dress, paired with simple

dangling earrings and sparkling gold eye makeup, made for a sophisticated look that was sexy in its demureness.

West, who had a swirl pattern shaved into his head, was head to toe in white, from his blinding diamond earring to his shoes.

Meanwhile, Usher wore a white shirt, vest and pants, but no jacket, with a brown tie and brown-and-white spectator shoes. Brandon Flowers of The Killers paired his white tuxedo, complete with white bow tie, with a black shirt.

Joss Stone, a hot newcomer, got noticed in her white gown covered with bright orange, pink and green oversized flowers.

Gwen Stefani arrived in a black minidress with loose shoulders and a keyhole neckline but changed to white for the show's opening number.

Surprisingly, a conservative dark banker's chalk-stripe suit was the other big trend on the green carpet (green instead of red because of Heineken's sponsorship) at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Jay-Z epitomized the look—and he wore it well. His pinstripes were complemented with a purple-and-white striped shirt, purple polka dot tie and white pocket square. Others in pinstripes included Hoobastank's Chris Hesse.

No fear

"I tried to wear a blindfold when I got dressed today," said smooth jazz star Dave Koz, who wore a navy pinstripe suit, green leather shoes and a green-and-raspberry striped shirt with a green pattern tie.

"I'm not afraid at all," he said. "Anything goes. The Grammys are reflective of music people who are creative."

But for all the bling and skin that MTV watchers are used to seeing, there were very few stars wearing anything flashy. And few of the rock stars who are known



GWEN STEFANI in rousing opener

for their T-shirts and jeans wore the casual look.

Johnny Van Zant of Lynyrd Skynyrd stayed true to his Southern rock roots, though. He wore a black leather vest, black T-shirt and jeans.

Most others, including Rob Thomas, put on suit jackets and button-down shirts, but skipped the tie.

Jennifer Lopez sang with husband Marc Anthony, in their first live duet, in a seafoam green gown with a gold-and-silver sparkling halter strap and similar beaded sash around her hips. It was the complete opposite of her famous green "barely there" Versace gown at the 2000 Grammys, which she attended with Sean "P Diddy" Combs.

Eve may have worn the lowest plunging V-neck of the evening in her short red Roberto Cavalli dress covered with beads and fringe at the hem—but it didn't push the envelope too far. The same could be said for Ashanti's nude-colored Gucci dress with shimmering gold discs outlining the V that framed her neck and bust.

Another fan of the deep V was Christina Milian, who wore a wrap-style dance dress covered with white beads.

Fergie of The Black Eyed Peas wore a strapless, body-hugging dress with a gold flower at the bust and a gold hem that flared out at the knee. "I'm going to put those little skirts away this year," she said during E! Entertainment's preshow.

Meanwhile, her bandmate will.i.am wore a brown stovepipe hat with his brown pinstripes.

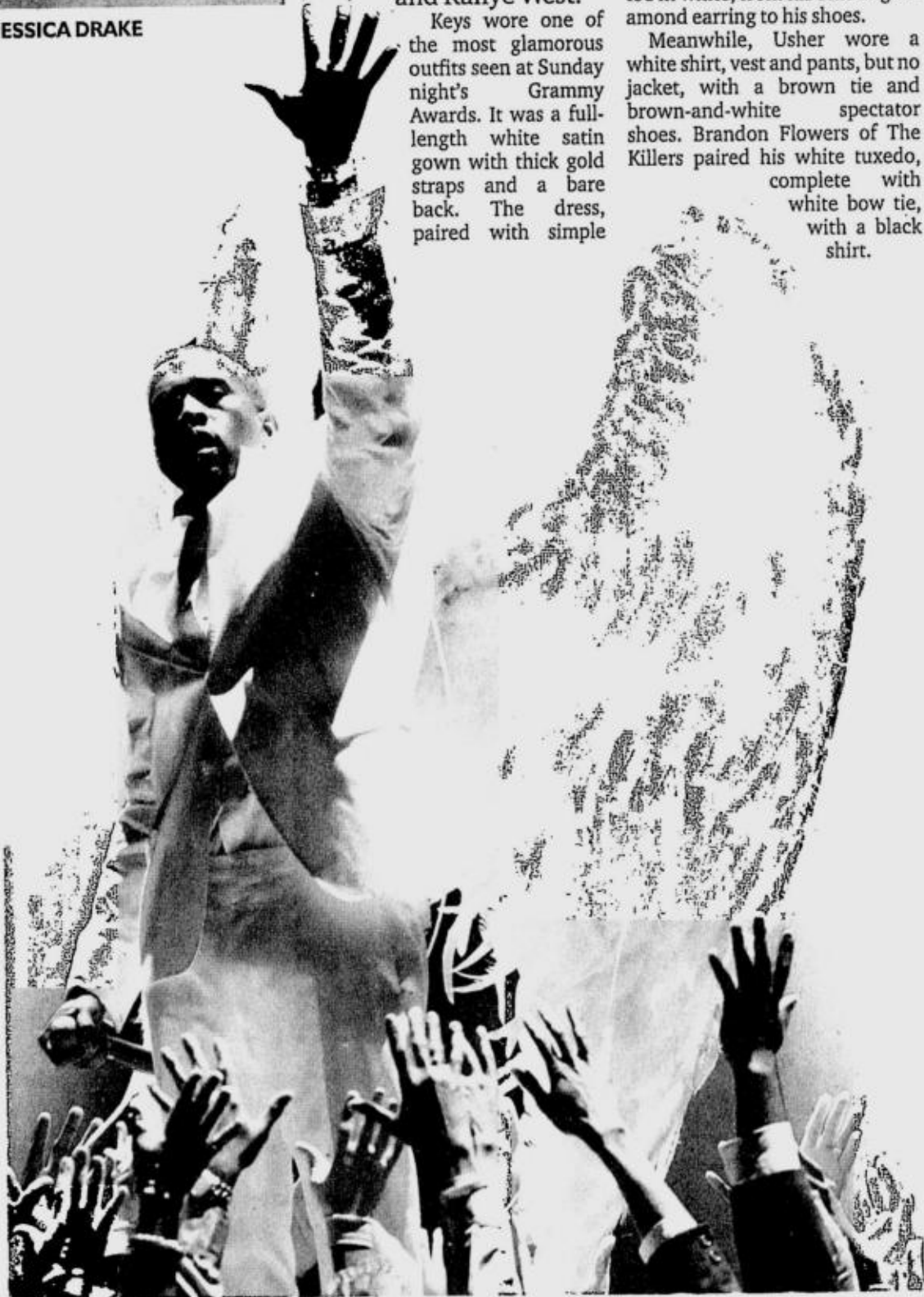
Janet Jackson wore a halter-style gown and E! fashion commentator Star Jones Reynolds wore an orange halter babydoll top with her light-colored pants with orange beading.

Jones Reynolds, living up to her diva reputation, had two outfits for her live two-hour show. The other was a pink pleated wrap-style gown with crystal embellishment, a tassel that hung from her hip and a high slit that went "from Georgia to Massachusetts," she said.

Talking to Grammys host Queen Latifah, whose arrival outfit was a salmon-colored gown with all-over pleats and a belt with a crystal-covered buckle, Jones Reynolds said, "All black women have the inner Diana Ross in them."

That said, Ricky Martin probably wore more necklaces with his black jacket and untucked white shirt than most of the women combined. Most of the jewelry was limited to diamond earrings and a handful of bangle bracelets.

Sheryl Crow wore a yellow halter-neck gown with a gold-trimmed cutout around her navel. She paired it with a WearYellow LiveStrong bracelet that raises money for cancer research through the Lance Armstrong Foundation on one arm and cyclist Armstrong, her boyfriend, on the other. AP



KANYE WEST rules, with wings

ALL PHOTOS BY REUTERS



ALICIA KEYS



FOR "TOXIC," not for kissing Madonna

ANTICLOWN.COM

Rod and Britney first-time winners

VETERAN British rocker Rod Stewart finally won the first Grammy of his career on Sunday, after being passed over 13 times.

Stewart, who turned 60 last month, won the Traditional Pop Vocal Album Grammy for his album of standards, "Stardust... The Great American Songbook: Volume III," which topped the US pop album charts last October, becoming his first No. 1 album in 25 years. It has sold 1.3 mil-

lion copies to date.

He was not present at the ceremony, because he is touring in Australia.

Stewart was beaten in this category in 2004 and 2003 for the first two "Songbook" albums, both times by Tony Bennett.

Pop star Britney Spears also won her first Grammy, for Best Dance Recording.

Spears, 23, was honored for her chart-topping song "Toxic," which ap-

peared on her 2003 album "In the Zone."

Spears was previously nominated six times: twice each in 2000, 2001 and 2003.

With her record sales tapering off in recent years, Spears has instead attracted headlines for such acts as kissing Madonna at the MTV Video Music Awards, getting married twice in one year, and using public toilets in bare feet. Reuters



FOR "STARDUST... The Great American Songbook: Volume III"

YAHOO.COM

Dubious role models on TV

FROM time to time, some groups conduct surveys on the most-admired personalities in the country. The surveys are supposed to provide the public, especially the youth, with inspiring examples and role models whose lives and achievements will in turn motivate others to also devote themselves to public service.

Unfortunately, quite a number of the "winners" turn out to be not really all that admirable. Some of them are self-obsessed, "user-friendly," have clawed their way to the top, etc.

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

One wonders, therefore, why the public hails them as role models. Does everybody want to claw his way to the top? What doth it profit a man, indeed...

Analyzed more closely, however, many of the undeserving "winners" have impinged themselves on the public's consciousness because they are "creatures of media."

They may not have much going for them in terms of brains, background, intelligence and/or principles, but their regular exposure in the media, especially on television, has made them popular, and consequently admired by the public.

Height of illogic

THIS is the height of illogic, of course, but some people aren't exactly famous for their ability to think straight.

So, young Filipinos who see these personalities regularly on TV get the mistaken notion that they're good at their jobs, and are responsible and selfless workers.

The people they work with know better, but the truth is kept from the public's eyes and ears, to keep their shows popular. If the public knew that their idols had feet of muddy clay, where would the credibility of those programs be?

So, the illusion of quality and responsibility is scrupulously sustained, and the gullible and clueless viewing masses fall for the telegenic rose. And, at year's end, some of these popular creatures of media end up on those "most admired" lists.

All this is a tribute, not really to these shallow personalities' effective deception, but to the media's ability to create the illusion of excellence from flawed and compromised material.

How is this amazing transformation achieved? There are both subtle and obvious tricks of the trade, of course, but a major tool is the TV medium's sheer frequency and ubiquity.

Patently spurious

IN OTHER words, even if you aren't much good, as long as you're put on the tube often enough, the viewing public eventually thinks you are good. That's patently spurious, of course—but then, that's TV magic for you.

How can the public protect itself from being taken for a ride in this regard? By knowing more of what a popular TV personality's job really entails.

For instance, if he's a TV newscaster, does he do more than just read the reports written by other people? If not, don't regard him as an astute broadcast journalist, just as a proficient newsreader.

Is he the host of an interview program? Don't judge him by his looks and glib tongue; instead, evaluate him on the incisiveness of his questions and comments, the way that he draws out his interviewees' most honest comments, and his ability to subtly shape interviews and discussions so that viewers are given the information they need to make their own conclusions.

All else is illusion, performance and entertainment.

Feedback

FROM Rosalia Laganzo Enerio of Caloocan City (excerpts): "Kudos to Cesar Montano for 'Panahoy sa Suba.' It surely deserved an A rating it got from the Cinema Evaluation Board. It should also have won as best picture in the 2004 Metro Manila filmfest, since it was clearly better than 'Mano Po.' I'm glad we were of the same choice in this regard."

"I had goosebumps as the impact of Montano's film engulfed me; nothing of that sort happened in the case of 'MP3.'"

"The CEB was in its element when it praised the film for its 'poetic, magical and sensitive storytelling.' Montano's masterful direction is a paean to the silent presence of Bohol's Loboc River as it bore witness to the community's unfolding human drama during World War II."

"I hope the film recoups its investment during its provincial run, and in the international market, as well. For my part, I am still exhorting my friends, officemates and acquaintances

to see 'Panahoy sa Suba' on the big screen, and never on CDs, especially the pirated ones."

"The film is totally engaging and absorbing. It's laden with positive values while depicting the simplicity of village folks despite the gravity of the conflicts gripping them. Thank you, Cesar Montano for daring to be different!"

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JAMIE FOXX

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THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE STORY OF RAY CHARLES

Will Smith delivers \$45.3-M debut

LOS ANGELES—Will Smith usually brings audiences in at gunpoint. This time, he did it with hugs and kisses.

Starting in his first romantic

comedy, the action hero scored a No. 1 debut with "Hitch," which took in \$45.3 million over Valentine's Day weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Clearly, Will Smith is the man," said Paul Der-garabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "He can open any kind of movie. He has multi-genre appeal."

The previous weekend's top movie, the horror tale "Boogeyman," fell to second place with \$10.8 million lifting its 10-day total to \$33.3 million.

The weekend's other new wide release, the animated family tale "Pooh's Heffalump Movie," opened at No. 5 with \$6 million.

Sony Pictures had the weekend's top three movies with "Hitch," "Boogeyman" and "Are We There Yet?," which was No. 3 at \$8.5 million.

"Hitch" stars Smith as a Manhattan "date doctor" who helps hopeless men win the hearts of their dream women but has romantic troubles when he meets his own soul mate (Eva Mendes).

It was the fifth-straight No. 1 debut for Smith, following "Shark Tale," "I, Robot," "Bad Boys II" and "Men in Black II." Those movies all opened in the \$46 million to \$52 million range.

Oscar nominees

Three key contenders for the Feb. 27 Academy Awards remained in the top 10. The boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby" was No. 4 with \$7.6 million, raising its total domestic gross to \$45.1 million.

The buddy tale "Sideways" took in \$4.75 million to finish in eighth place, lifting its total to \$53.1 million. The Howard Hughes epic was ninth with \$4.6 million, pushing its domestic haul to \$82.3 million.

Two movies opened solidly in limited release. "Bride & Prejudice," a romance that updates Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" to a modern-day Bollywood musical in India, took in \$388,076 in 32 theaters. The film is directed by Gurinder Chadha ("Bend It Like Beckham").

The documentary "Inside Deep Throat" debuted solidly with \$91,000 in 12 theaters. Produced by Brian Grazer ("A Beautiful Mind"), the NC-17-rated film examines the cultural impact of the 1972 porn blockbuster "Deep Throat."

Top 10

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.:

- 1) "Hitch," \$45.3 million
- 2) "Boogeyman," \$10.8 million
- 3) "Are We There Yet?," \$8.5 million
- 4) "Million Dollar Baby," \$7.6 million
- 5) "Pooh's Heffalump Movie," \$6 million
- 6) "The Wedding Date," \$5.6 million
- 7) "Hide and Seek," \$5.55 million
- 8) "Sideways," \$4.75 million
- 9) "The Aviator," \$4.6 million
- 10) "Meet the Fockers," \$3.4 million AP

And now, 'Carmen'

BERLIN—Bizer's tragic opera "Carmen" has been translated for the first time into the South African language of Xhosa and turned into a stunning film shot in Cape Town town ship, which premiered Sunday at the Berlinale.

"Carmen" in Khayelitsha, the township where the story of love, jealousy, revenge and ultimately murder has been set, stars a 40-person music and theater troupe in their debut before the camera.

The audience warmly applauded the film, only the second South African feature to compete for a prestigious Golden Bear award and the first in a quarter century at the annual festival.

Carmen is played by Pauline Malefane, who was also instrumental in carrying out the translation. The 29-year-old had already portrayed Carmen many times on stage but said moving the French opera from a Spanish slum to a South African setting and transforming it into a movie was a challenge.

AFP

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SIDEWAYS

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1 (PG-13) CONSTANTINE PG13

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IT... Based on the novel by
E. NesbitFirst Oscars
handed out

PASADENA—Actress Scarlett Johansson handed out the first Oscar statuettes of the 77th Annual Academy Awards to movie engineers on Saturday while gamely slogging through complex descriptions of inventions she admitted she did not quite comprehend.

Among those honored were the men who created "bluescreen" technology that allowed actors to be placed in locations they were nowhere near, and engineers who made camera cranes more mobile and improved wide-screen cinematography.

The Academy also honored the inventors of 11 other devices, including lights, audio systems, special effects makeup and animation software.

From the start of the black-tie gala in Pasadena, California, Johansson warned attendees about the perils of the jargon-laden script she was reading from a teleprompter.

"You need to stay alert in the first part of the evening or you'll be lost forever," she said. "The words are coming out of my mouth but I'm just not processing them."

The audience of mostly engineers and mathematicians seemed to startle Johansson at one point, by applauding during her lengthy description of motion-capture technology used in films like "Polar Express" and "I, Robot" to mimic human movements.

"Wow. It's a real crowd pleaser," she said.

Big winners

The night's big winners were the men who designed and built the Louma Camera Crane and Technocrane systems, which put cameras in places where their operators could not easily go, and helped capture complex action sequences.

Horst Burbulla developed the Technocrane telescoping crane and introduced it to Steven Spielberg, who first used it in the 1981 action-adventure film "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

The team of Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and David Samuelson developed the Louma Camera Crane system in 1978 to replace heavy and slow-moving fixed-length cranes that were used on movie sets to capture high-angle shots.

The Academy gave the Gordon E. Sawyer Award to Panavision engineer Takuo Miyagishima, who, in his nearly 50-year career, invented a series of camera lenses, including one that enhanced the cinematography of wide-screen formats.

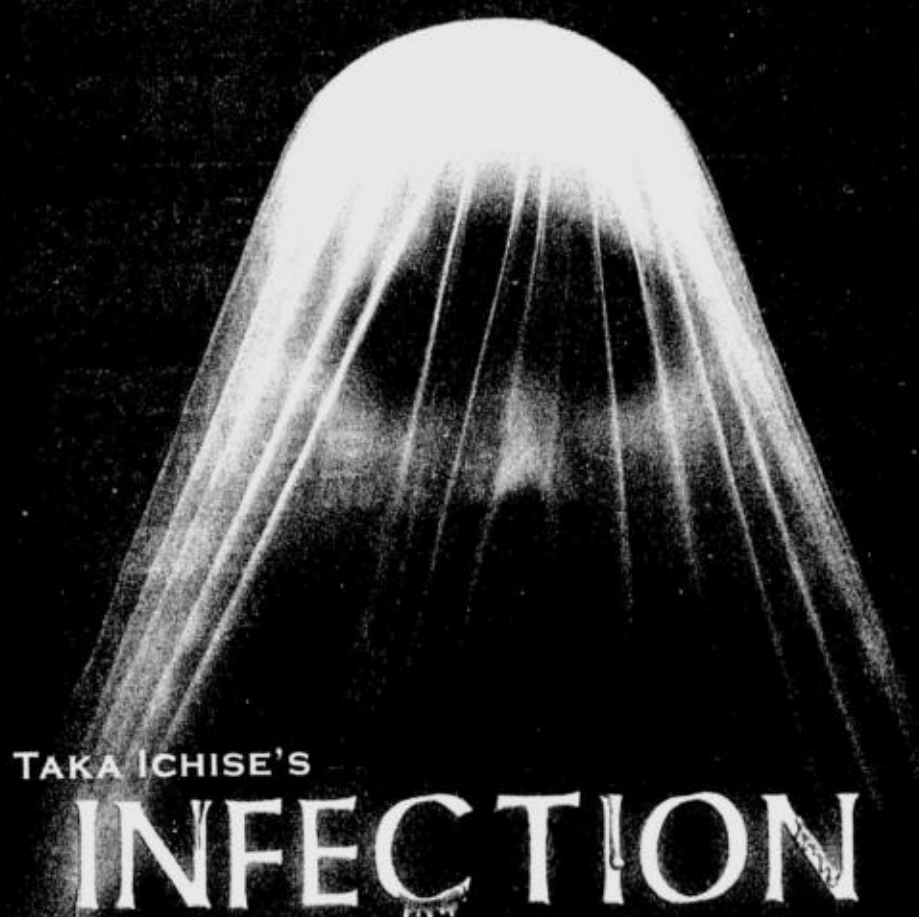
Former Eastman Kodak engineer Arthur Widmer was honored for a lifetime of cinematic achievements, including his invention of "bluescreen" compositing technology that first combined actors on soundstages with pre-filmed backgrounds.

Reuters

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Gov't downplays rating downgrade

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said the high probability of another credit-rating downgrade for the Philippines would not have much negative impact on the government's finances as feared, believing the international capital market had already adjusted in the past to the likely downgrade.

Former Finance Secretary Juanita Amato, who now serves as chair of the DOF's Municipal Finance Corp. and adviser to newly appointed Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, said the price of Philippine sovereign bonds were not expected to significantly increase just because of a possible downgrade by international ratings firm Moody's Investors Service.

A credit downgrade normally increases a government's borrowing cost because the market uses the risk perception as a basis to ask for higher interest rate.

But "a credit downgrade has

Moody's, which is expected to issue its decision this month, last downgraded by a notch to Ba2 the Philippines' rating in January last year, and accompanied it with a "negative" outlook.

The possible downgrade by Moody's a few weeks from now would match the earlier decision of ratings firm Standard & Poor's to downgrade the Philippines' long-term foreign currency credit also by a notch to BB- from BB.

Purisima, for his part, said he expected the market to still show confidence in the Philippines because of the good fundamentals that the economy has had recently. He cited the strong gross domestic product growth of 6.1 percent and the 10-percent expansion in exports last year.

The new finance chief also brushed aside fears that the peso, which has gained renewed

strength in the past few days, might again be dragged down by terrorist activities. On Monday, Abu Sayyaf-linked bombings rocked Makati, General Santos and Davao.

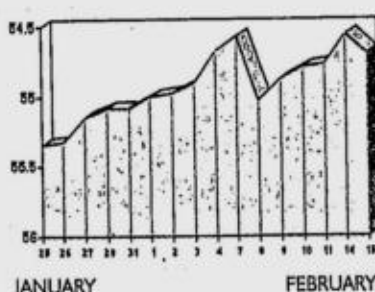
"These are temporary noises that the market should see through, considering our good fundamentals," he said, although adding that knee-jerk reaction might be seen in the market.

Purisima also cited the Philippines' delisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a Paris-based watchdog, from the list of uncooperative countries in the international community's fight against money laundering.

"That's a big victory for our country," he said, adding it would boost government efforts on confidence building in the Philippines.

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As of 5 p.m., Feb. 15, 2005

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STOCK MARKET

Shares hit new 5-year high

SHARE prices closed up 0.27 percent yesterday, recovering from sharp early losses following a series of bomb attacks late Monday to hit fresh five-year highs, dealers said.

Bomb attacks by al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf militants in three cities, including the Makati financial district, left 12 dead and over 130 injured.

The attacks had initially scared off investors but the market then picked up steadily in healthy volumes on the view that the economy remains solid and corporate results should be strong, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index put on 5.60 points at 2,090.10, coming off a low of 2,047.51. This was the best finish since Jan. 17, 2000, when the main index settled at 2,097.23.

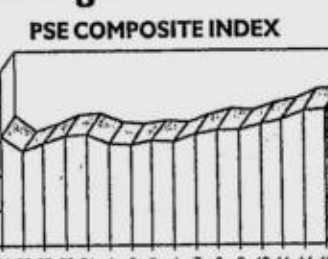
Volume was 6.36 billion shares worth P2.08 billion after 4.25 billion shares worth P1.89 billion on Monday.

The broader all-shares index ended up 2.10 points at 1,207.80. Gainers led losers 79 to 40, with 36 stocks unchanged.

The attacks "were no big deal to fund managers. Yes, it's unfortunate but it doesn't deflect investor optimism on the economy," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

The early morning fall was even taken as an opportunity to accumulate more stocks, he added.

AFP



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Finance warns Senate against multiple VAT rates

SECRETARY Cesar Purisima, in his first day at the Department of Finance yesterday, stressed the DOF's firm opposition against the Senate's proposal to implement a multiple value-added tax rate.

"It opens room for negotiation, and the chances of corruption will increase," Purisima said in an interview with reporters after yesterday's turnover ceremony of the top finance post at the Department of Finance.

Purisima explained that replacing the uniform 10-percent VAT system with a multi-tiered structure might encourage tax-

payers to engage in tactics that would make them pay a lower VAT. The DOF said taxes with multiple rates were more prone to leakages than those with a single rate.

Aside from the possibility of a heightened number of corruption cases, Purisima said the DOF also opposes a multi-tiered VAT system because it would lead to an administrative nightmare. If the proposal is implemented, then the Bureau of Internal Revenue will have to check each and every sale and purchase of a

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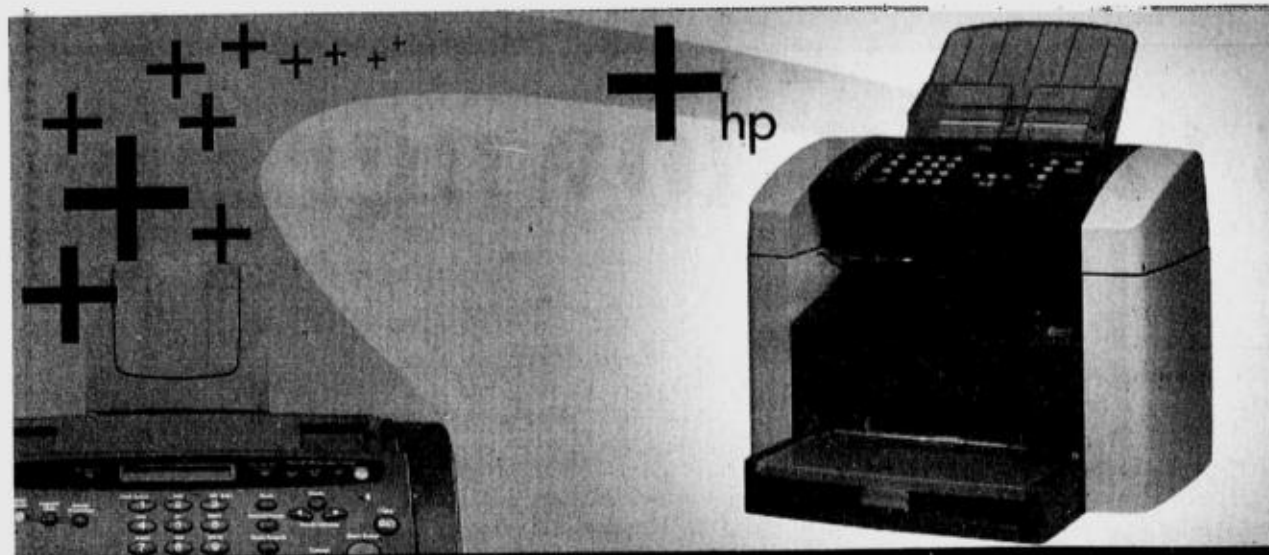
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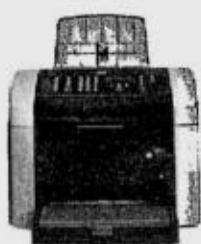
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Bank lending up in '04; manufacturing loans jump 14%



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0813, Series of 2005

By Doris C. Dumlaog

COMMERCIAL bank lending rose by 2.6 percent to P1.53 trillion in December 2004 from a year ago on higher loan absorption by the manufacturing sector, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The annual loan growth in December was slightly lower than the 3.6 percent rise in November, albeit it represented an expansion for the 10th straight month.

On a monthly basis, total commercial bank lending dropped by 1.1 percent during the period, a reversal from the 4.2 percent increase in the previous month.

"The modest pace of private sector credit activity can be traced to the continued presence of spare capacity in the economy and the present driving role of less credit-intensive sectors such as agriculture in overall real sector activity," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura explained.

"Subdued credit conditions have also been linked to structural conditions in the banking sector, where new lending continues to be dampened partly by prevailing levels of non-performing loans among banks," he said.

But he said the BSP remained firmly committed to resolving these problems in its continuing efforts to reform and strengthen the financial sector, beginning with various measures to help banks in the disposition of their non-performing assets.

On a sectoral basis, he said loans to the manufacturing sector accounted for more than a quarter of total loans, rising by 14.1 percent from a year ago.

There was likewise an increase in bank lending to other sectors such as agriculture, utilities and wholesale/retail trade.

On the other hand, there was a decline in loans released to financial institutions, real



BUENAVENTURA

estate and business services as well as construction sectors.

"Stronger activity is a key ingredient to sustained economic expansion in the medium term, and for this reason monetary authorities continue to focus on ensuring the appropriate environment for credit expansion while guarding against further build-up in pressures on consumer prices," Buenaventura said.

On this basis, and consistent with a projected real gross domestic product growth of 5.3-6.3 percent and an inflation target range of 5-6 percent this year, the BSP expects commercial bank lending to expand by as much as 12 percent this year.

"Investment flows are expected to drive economic growth this year with the liberalization of the mining sector and the continuing expansion in infrastructure requirements including those for the power sector," Buenaventura said.

BSP wants banks to disclose ATM charges

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to slap tighter disclosure regulations on banks' automated teller machine (ATM) charges in view of widespread customer complaints.

In a press briefing Monday night, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the institution may soon require banks to post their ATM charges so that clients would not be surprised with the deductions made by the banks per transaction.

"What we're trying to do is to encourage them (ATM networks) to merge so that there's only one system and there are economies of scale," Buenaventura said. "Just think of the cost of maintaining three systems."

He was referring to the three ATM networks in the country—Megalink, ExpressNet and Bancnet. He had wanted to see the merger of these network before he retires from the BSP this July, to generate savings for both the banks and the depositors.

"Until that thing happens we can issue a regulation requiring banks to post their charges. When you press the machine itself, the charges will have to be disclosed, whether you withdraw from your own network or from other network—what are your charges when you withdraw," he said.

Not all banks voluntarily disclose the charges upon the use of their machines such as for withdrawal or balance inquiry. Earlier, incoming BSP Governor Amando Tetangco

Jr. already appealed to the banks to voluntarily post their ATM charges in all the machines to make the charges more transparent.

In the United States, ATM charges are automatically posted so that the consumer can decide whether to use a particular machine or not.

The BSP is also pushing for a "grievance mechanism" to process complaints against banks.

While banks do not charge for the use of ATMs by their own account holders, they slap varying fees when their machines are used by depositors of other banks. While there is interconnection between some of the ATM networks, the charge goes even higher when another network is used.

A recent survey by INQ7money.net indicated that banks charge ATM fees ranging from P7 to P10.80 if a client uses a machine not owned by his/her own bank.

The same survey showed that banks charge a monthly fee ranging from P55 to P300 once clients' deposits fall below the minimum daily balance, which in turn range from P500 to P3,000.

The BSP cannot compel the banks to lower the ATM fees as the institution could not intervene in free-market pricing. At the very least, however, it knows consumers must be protected by making fees and charges transparent.

Doris C. Dumlaog

Foreign chambers back immigration project

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri recently lauded the Joint Foreign Chambers (JFC) for backing the P150-million build-operate-transfer (BOT) high-technology alien documentation project of the Bureau of Immigration, saying this would hasten the full implementation of the project.

Neri earlier said the government was expecting some P1.5 billion in potential revenue from the project over the next 10 years. The BI initiative, called Alien Certificate of Registration Identification Card (ACR I-Card) uses the modern biometric technology to consolidate all documentation requirements into a single micro-chip.

The project, which has no cost and no risk to the government, is expected to raise more than P150 million in the first year alone. The revenue estimate is based on the government's 50-percent share in the \$50 card fee to be paid annually by an estimated 87,500 legal aliens in the country.

The estimated first-year revenue would also include a P30-million concession fee imposed by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) on the BOT proponent.

The annual card fee was reviewed and approved by a committee composed of representatives from the trade and finance departments, the Neda, the Investment Coordinating Council, the BOT Center, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the National Computer Center.

Neri said the statement of support from the JFC "resulted in a significant increase in

early renewal of alien registration among expatriates who are on extended stay in the country." At a recent meeting with Palace officials, the JFC urged the government to speed up the nationwide implementation of the project.

The JFC is composed of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, French Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines and Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"I believe the various foreign chambers are now calling on all their members to immediately avail themselves of the new high-tech card," Neri said. He pointed out that the JFC support "will help the government further improve its services to the expatriate communities here."

The BI has set up a nationwide Wide Area Network on an Internet protocol (IP) Virtual Private Network connecting the seven international airports, one seaport and 12 district ports in the country. The network is expected to speed up the processing of entry and exit for all I-Card holders in the special booths in all major immigration lanes, Neri added.

Several local and international technology leaders are assisting the BI in the project. These include Ayala Group's Innove, Gemplus of France, Identix of Minnesota and California-based Hewlett-Packard.



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Female Guys win 3D patriarch

THANKS to a judge who is unafraid to cut through the judicial thicket, the bedridden patriarch of the 3D appliance group has been reunited with his wife and female children and, more important, now been given 24/7 medical care in a hospital.

Fed up with lawyers' equivocations and delaying tactics, Judge Aida Roque of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 25 asked that she herself personally see Francisco Guy Co Chia, the Alzheimer's-stricken founder of the 3D appliance group.

Over the initial objections of son Gilbert Guy, Roque on Friday drove to the Greenmeadows home of Gilbert, who has been keeping the wheelchair-bound patriarch since March last year, accompanied by Mrs. Guy and the other children.

Worried at how the health of the Guy patriarch had deteriorated, the judge granted the request of Mrs. Guy to have her husband be checked up and confined at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center under the care of his long-time doctor, neurologist Rogelio Libarnes.

Roque has been hearing the intra-corporate dispute among the Guy family as to whom between Gilbert and his mother-plus-sisters have the right to manage the 3D empire.

Prior to Roque's bold action, Gilbert, who claims his father has chosen to live with him rather than with his mother, has had so far managed to block a medical writ of habeas corpus issued by another Quezon City RTC judge, Vivencio Bacig, way back in July.

Ironically, the unfulfilled Bacig order was for the ailing patriarch to be brought to the same Dr. Libarnes for medical check-up.

Semirara mystery

NATIONAL Development Corp. has started an inquiry as to why NDC and Development Bank of the Philippines had been unable to avail themselves of the increased capital call and share rights offering of Semirara Mining Corp.

According to the grapevine, NDC general manager Arthur

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



Aguilar has been ordered to submit a formal report to the NDC and DBP boards, after outgoing Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima personally expressed concern why the cash-strapped government has been left out of the multibillion-peso secondary offering windfall despite it being the strategic partner and regulator for the country's biggest coal mine.

Money-go-round

• CITYLAND has acquired the former Marietta Apartments in Ermita, across the Hizon's bakeshop.

• DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines has scheduled a sheriff's sale tomorrow of the Bel Air home and properties in Cabuyao and Calumpit of Abeto and Shirley Uy of Philsteel and Bulacan Steel to settle more than P724 million in bad debts owed by the couple's floundering steel business.

• ALSO tomorrow, the Makati sheriff's office is scheduled to auction the 1,426-square-meter Dasmariñas Village house and lot of Graciano and Monalisa Lacanale of Concentric Industries to settle more than P68.5 million in soured loan with the Standard Chartered Bank.

Heard through the grapevine

WITH the appointment of career central banker Amando Tetangco Jr. as the next governor, expect Assistant Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. and Managing Director Diwa Gunigundo to move up the bureaucratic ladder.

The three are key members of the no-nonsense economic brain trust of outgoing Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pltd-sl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Finance warns Senate against multiple VAT rates

From page B1

company to determine whether the appropriate rate was used in paying the VAT for each transaction.

Earlier, Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the revenue agency's auditing system was not yet prepared for a multiple-rate VAT structure. He added that the proposal would entail an enormous task of public information campaign because taxpayers would have to classify each of their sales and purchases according to the applied VAT rate every time they would pay the tax.

"I strongly support the view that it should be as simple as possible. The simpler the system is, the more efficient the administration will be," Purisima said.

Another finance official also warned that multiple VAT rates might be harmful to state revenues, therefore defeat the purpose of generating more income for the fiscally troubled government.

The official explained that with a multiple rate, there was a possibility that some sectors might be perennially entitled to input VAT credits and tax refunds. This will happen if the products regularly purchased by a company have higher VAT rates than the products or services it sells.

The proposal to raise the VAT

rate from 10 to 12 percent is expected to yield P35 billion in additional revenue a year. But the BIR said the figure would significantly be slashed, probably by more than half, if the VAT reform proposal would be transformed into a multiple-rate structure.

Some senators, led by ways and means committee chair Sen. Ralph Recto, are strongly in favor of a multi-tiered VAT system, saying it was a way to ease the impact of higher taxes on poor families. Considering the proposed VAT increase as anti-poor, the senators said the move to generate more VAT collection should contain safeguards for the poor. A proposal in the House of Representatives was to impose only a 6-percent VAT on sensitive products like basic food commodities.

Purisima said the DOF would be in favor of keeping the VAT exemption of some food items, but insisted that power services, and those rendered by doctors and lawyers should have their VAT exemptions lifted.

The new finance chief said that contrary to perception, the VAT was actually pro-poor because the huge revenue to be generated from the proposal to raise it to 12 percent would give the government enough resources to improve social services, which are availed of more by poor rather than rich families. Michelle V. Remo

RP bonds sparkle in steady market

HONG KONG—Philippine dollar bonds rebounded yesterday, recouping overnight losses sparked by explosions in Manila and two southern cities that killed at least 11 people, traders said.

The broader market was steady, a little cautious ahead of US Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan's congressional testimony today.

Philippine sovereign bonds due in 2015 were quoted at 104/104.50 in price terms after being dealt as low as 103.625 in New York trade.

"We have regained the down move in New York from where it left them," said a Manila-based dealer. "They feel the bombings are contained and will not continue."

Another trader in Singapore noted buying interest at the longer end.

"The weakness is seen as an opportunity to buy, with offshore interest driving the longer end, where prices have come off from their highs," the dealer said.

Bonds maturing in 2025 were trading at 113.75/114.125, marginally higher than Monday's level.

Spreads tightened in the credit

derivatives market too, where the cost of insuring Philippine sovereign debt for five years fell by about 3 basis points to 375 basis points, or \$375,000 for every \$10 million of principal protected.

Regional benchmark bonds were broadly stable with ports-to-telecom conglomerate Hutchison bonds due in 2014 quoted at 103/99 basis points (bps) over Treasuries while those maturing in 2033 were bps 154/151 over.

South Korean sovereign bonds due in 2014 were steady at 75/65 bps.

Today's congressional testimony and the recent tightening of spreads in the high-yield segment were striking a note of caution among analysts.

"People are simply being cautious ahead of the Humphrey-Hawkins testimony just in case Greenspan says the economy is doing fine," said the Singapore-based trader, referring to Greenspan's semi-annual survey of the US economy. Reuters



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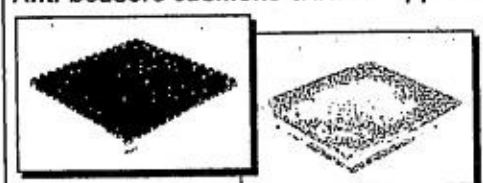
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PSE expects more IPOs in '05

Exec shrugs off bombings, remains bullish on trade prospects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Jollibee '04 income up 25% to P1.57B

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. yesterday said that its net earnings grew 25 percent to P1.57 billion last year supported by the growth in sales.

For the period between October to December, net income rose 16 percent to P400.8 million, the fast-food giant said in a statement.

Jollibee said system-wide sales—a measure of all sales to consumers both from company-owned and franchised stores—grew by 23 percent last year to P35.54 billion, while fourth quarter system-wide sales increased 22.2 percent to P9.92 billion.

The growth in sales was broad-based, with sales from the Jollibee brand increasing by 13.7 percent, Chowking by 39.4 percent, Greenwich by 14.7 percent, Delifrance by 11.4 percent and Yonghe King in the People's Republic of China by 36.8 percent.

The Jollibee Group of Companies opened a total of 158 stores worldwide last year.

It was the most number of stores opened in a single year throughout its 26-year history.

The Jollibee brand opened 37 stores, Chowking 59, Greenwich 32, Delifrance 5, and foreign stores 25.

Most of the stores that had opened abroad were in Mainland China.

The Yonghe King led the opening with 17 stores.

Recently, the Jollibee brand opened its 500th store in Isabela, Basilan.

Tony Tan Caktiong, Jollibee chair and chief executive officer, said the company was able to increase its pace in 2004 after it launched its P 1.5-billion commissary in Canlubang, Laguna, in January, and acquired China's Yonghe King in March.

"There are many challenging things we have to do ahead as we pursue our long term goals," Tan Caktiong said. "We have reason to have confidence that many of these will be attained because of what our people and our brands accomplished in 2004."

Cash increased slightly to P2.9 billion as of Dec. 31 even after the company spent P1.5 billion in capital expenditures, mostly in new stores, and P650 million for the acquisition of an 85 percent stake in Yonghe King.

The company also paid P408 million in cash dividends to shareholders.

The Jollibee Group of Companies operates the Philippines' largest fast-food network.

The firm has, to date, a total of 1,065 stores throughout the country.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

WHILE the market yesterday opened to weak trading following a spate of bombings around the country, Philippine Stock Exchange officials remain bullish on trade prospects.

In fact, the PSE is expecting more maiden offerings to be conducted this year, according to industry sources.

Francis Lim, PSE president, said that despite the market's initial weakness yesterday due to Monday night's bomb attacks, he remained optimistic on the prospects for stocks and the conduct of initial public offerings.

"Despite the news, the market has really gone up," Lim said. "What is important for investors is that the fundamentals of government are intact. We are keeping our fingers crossed that

events like this won't happen again."

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index yesterday ended 5.60 points up to 2,090.10.

According to Lim, the developments that helped support the market included last year's better-than-expected economic growth, the continued appreciation of the peso, the opening up of the mining sector to foreign investments and improved corporate earnings.

Meanwhile, industry sources said that among those being invited to look at possible IPOs are e-Telecare Global Solutions and Chikka Txt Messenger, the popular gateway to texting through mobile phones.

Also, the country's leading Internet search engine Yehey.com is mulling over the possibility of conducting an initial public offer-

ing sometime in 2005 or 2006, industry sources told the INQUIRER.

Yehey is 88 percent-owned by listed firm iVantage Corp.

Last year, only International Exchange Bank braved a maiden offering at the stock market.

The PSE emerged as the best-performing bourse among its neighboring counterparts for January, with the index surging 10.8 percent or 196.73 points to 2,019.56 from 1,822.83 in December last year.

Year-on-year, the index soared 33.9 percent from 2004's 1,508.30. Trading volume was significantly higher at 71.9 billion shares, or 877.2 percent higher from the 7.4 billion shares traded in the same period last year.

Value turnover surged 92.4 percent at P40.5 billion as against P21.05 billion in January 2004.

Jollibee champions Pinoy values

By Anne Luisa E. Villarico

JOLLIBEE, the homegrown fast-food chain that has a busy bee for a mascot, has come to champion Filipino values.

Through its campaign, "Ang Batang Pinoy ay Jollibee Kid," the country's leading fast-food chain for 25 years hopes to promote and enhance the Pinoy ethos through a comprehensive values education program for students in Metro Manila's public and private schools.

Jollibee is undertaking this program together with the Department of Education National Capital Region and Mary Lindbert International.

"Ang Batang Pinoy ay Jollibee Kid" has a three-fold objective: to enhance the understanding of values; to teach the children to appreciate and preserve cultural heritage; and, to inspire patriotism among the youth.

"Jollibee believes that the future belongs to the young and that good sound values should be taught early on in their lives," said Inez Z. Reyes, vice president for marketing.

This five-year campaign is Jollibee's way of thanking their customers for 25 years of continuous patronage.

"Jollibee has grown so much since opening that first store on Claro M. Recto in 1978, and this is one way of giving something back," Reyes said. "Jollibee could've (done) something else, but good values are something that the company can really build on."

Batang Pinoy was launched in June 2003, coinciding with the commemoration of Independence Day. Twenty-eight schools took part in the program.

Jollibee focused its effort in 14 areas in Metro Manila where they distributed over 300,000 workbooks. The 28 participating schools are selected by Batang Pinoy organizers by raffling off the names of the schools in each area.

Batang Pinoy hopes to cultivate in the children of grades 1 and 2 the four core values: courtesy (magalang), honesty (matapat), helpfulness (matulungin) and sense of community service (mapagalingkod). The workbook,



A TEACHER of a public elementary school goes over a Jollibee workbook with a student in her class while an official of the Department of Education looks on. Jollibee has undertaken a program to promote and enhance Filipino values among schoolchildren.

which doubles as a coloring book, contains practical exercises on values application.

"We did a very thorough pre-test and post-test on the students to find out their level of understanding and find out if they have a concept (of good values)," Reyes said.

The program is now being undertaken in 50 schools, from the 28 that first participated in 2003.

"When other schools found out about the project, the heads of the schools also asked if they could apply Batang Pinoy in their classes," Reyes said.

Aside from distributing workbooks, Batang Pinoy also conducts "school intervention" at least once a month.

"We make a skit a la Sesame Street or Nickelodeon," Reyes said. "This is done through a team of Jollibee mascots, actors and actresses depicting situations using the values they want to teach

to the children."

The Jollibee officials also talked to school heads to ask for their opinion regarding the advocacy campaign.

Reyes said that they were pleased at the success of their values education. She reported that values awareness went up to 73 percent from the pre-test result of 40 percent.

The program continues with the "Ang Batang Pinoy ay Jollibee Kid Painting contest," which is open to kids from grades 1 to 6 in Metro Manila public and private schools.

The National Consumers Choice Foundation in 2003 cited Jollibee for its outstanding school program. It said the fast-food firm, through its program, had made a significant contribution to the general well-being of the consumers and the public in general.

Reyes said that in the next few years, they hoped to bring their program to schools outside Metro Manila.

GMA asks NTC to stop merger of Home, Sky

GMA NETWORK Inc. has asked the National Telecommunications Commission to stop the merger of the Lopez-owned SkyCable and PLDT's Home Cable and the resulting entity would result in the monopoly of the cable business in the country and impair competition in the cable television industry.

SkyCable is the trade name of Central CATV Inc. Home Cable is short for Philippine Home Cable Holdings Inc. that used to be controlled by a unit of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Both cable firms had to go through debt restructuring and the merger was said to resolve its financial problems.

The consolidation would create Beyond Cable Holdings Inc. The ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. would then sink \$30 million into

the new company to finance the acquisition of set-up boxes that would protect cable signals from piracy—one of the factors crippling the finances of cable firms.

GMA said that the merger was unlawful not only because it violated Section 20 of the Public Service Act, but also the cable firms' respective franchises.

Section 20 of the Public Service Act prohibits companies engaged in public service to "merge or consolidate its property." That is, unless the merger was approved by the NTC.

GMA then urged the NTC to issue a cease-and-desist order to prevent the cable giants from merging.

The broadcast network warned of "greater damage" if the Commission would not stop the merger immediately. Clarissa S. Batino

CURRENCIES

February 15, 2005	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.770950	1.000000	54.5820
Japan	Yen	0.007333	0.009511	0.5191
United Kingdom	Pound	1.456017	1.888600	103.0836
Hongkong	Dollar	0.998847	1.28215	6.9982
Switzerland	Franc	0.843424	0.834585	45.5533
Canada	Dollar	0.625264	0.811030	44.2676
Singapore	Dollar	0.470321	0.610054	33.2890
Australia	Dollar	0.607909	0.788519	43.0389
Bahrain	Dinar	2.045016	2.652590	144.7837
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.265887	0.266667	14.5552
Brunei	Dollar	0.468891	0.608199	33.1967
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.02009	0.026059	1.4224
UAE	Dirham	0.209937	0.272309	14.8632
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.297100	70.7993
Argentina	Peso	0.265479	0.344353	18.7955
Brazil	Real	0.298148	0.386728	21.1084
Denmark	Kroner	0.134314	0.174219	9.5092
India	Rupee	0.017683	0.022936	1.2519
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.202909	0.263193	14.3656
Mexico	New Peso	0.069137	0.089678	4.8948
New Zealand	Dollar	0.551388	0.715205	39.0373
Norway	Kroner	0.118954	0.154295	8.4217
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012984	0.016841	0.9162
Syria	Rand	0.127693	0.166531	9.0405
South Africa	Won	0.000752	0.000976	0.0533
Korea	Kroner	0.11015	0.142876	7.7985
Sweden	Pound	0.014852	0.019264	1.0515
Syria	Ni Dollar	0.024448	0.031711	1.7308
Taiwan	Bolivar	0.000402	0.000522	0.0285
Venezuela				

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 15, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.2	4.35	4.2	4.3	307,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	28.5	31	28.5	30	1,463,700
China Banking Corp.	56.5	58	56.5	58	1,049,700
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	1,760
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	48.5	50	48.5	50	220,400
International Exch. Bank	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.51	19,800,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	4,481,800
Philippine National Bank	35.5	37	35.5	37	368,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	16	16	15.5	15.5	7,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	30	29.5	30	82,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.99	1.02	0.98	1.02	660,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	200	220	200	210	150
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2450	2450	2450	240
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.12	2.12	91,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	132	134	132	134	2,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1785	1810	1785	1810	2,160
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.5	18.25	17.5	18.25	50,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.74	1.66	1.72	17,722,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	940	940	920	930	31,400
Ispace Inc.	4.7	5.1	4.7	5.1	677,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.055	0.0525	0.055	1,200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.04	0.037	0.04	6,900,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	49,000
Philippine Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.7	7,865,000
Philnet Dis. Tel. Co.	1420	1435	1420	1430	182,810
iVantage Corp.	0.65	0.7	0.65	0.7	3,530,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	34,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	84,400
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	27.5	26	27	915,900
Palawan Corp.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.8	1,408,000
Salcom Power Corp.	2.2	2.34	2.12	2.34	119,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.58	1.64	1.58	1.64	1,280,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.88	1.96	1.88	1.96	1,310,000
Int'l Container Term Sv	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.3	165,000
Keppel Ship. Marine Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	50,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	350,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.53	0.63	0.53	0.59	8,600,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.94	1.02	0.94	1.02	2,590,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	0.84	1.05	0.84	1.05	12,547,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	15,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	225,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	286,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.2	473,000
Binlong San Miguel Inc.	36	37	36	36.5	157,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28.5	27	28.5	1,130,700
RFM Corp.	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.83	160,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	340,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	90,200
San Miguel Corp. B	79	80	79	80	385,900
Universal Robina Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	97,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	2,500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	11	11	11	11	10,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.018	0.011	0.015	1,494,700,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.016	0.01	0.016	98,500,000
Ayala Corp.	8.5	8.6	8.3	8.6	8,668,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.71	0.74	0.7	0.72	2,460,000
Aboltiz Equity Ventures	3.95	4.25	3.95	4.15	2,511,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	2,590,000
Alo Net Holdings Inc.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.031	8,700,000
A. Serrano Corp.	2.06	2.2	2.06	2.2	465,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.37	0.4	10,330,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	98,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	19.5	19.75	19.5	19.75	8,000
Boulevard Holdings, Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.155	0.165	2,990,000
Bengros Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.8	0.83	109,400,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.23	1,800,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	8,000
CADP Group Corp.	0.27	0.29	0.26	0.29	11,140,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.66	0.73	0.65	0.69	10,100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	4.95	4.95	4.65	4.65	5,314,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	14,400,000
Ever-Goteco Resources	0.0525	0.0575	0.05	0.055	17,200,000
Fluinvest Dev. Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.5	1.62	937,000
Fluinvest Holdings Corp.	47	51	47	50	251,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	0.0875	0.095	0.085	0.0925	16,000,000
Global Equities Inc.	1.94	2.16	1.9	2.08	7,183,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.72	1.82	1.72	1.8	540,000
Ionics Inc.	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.2	1,673,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.32	2.24	2.29	375,000

RP sees robust growth in IT services sector

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT and the private sector are stepping up efforts for the local information technology-enabled services sector to ride on the projected 13-percent industry growth in Asia-Pacific.

Citing a study made by global market research and advisory firm International Data Corp., the Department of Trade and Industry said the projected growth rate for the region was twice the rate expected for the global ITES market.

Last year, investments in IT and ITES projects grew 49.4 percent to P8.07 billion from P5.4 billion in 2003.

To sustain the momentum and drum up greater investor interest in the Philippines, the government is hosting the two-day e-Services Philippines 2005 CEO Forum that opens Thursday.

Sponsored by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem), the forum expects "entrepreneurial visionaries and blue-chip CEOs" from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Hong Kong,

Singapore and Japan to explore the country's potential as a site for out-sourced jobs.

Assistant Trade Secretary Felicitas Agoncillo-Reyes, who is also Citem executive director, said the government hoped the forum would set the stage for significant ITES business deals.

Aside from call center services, other non-core but critical backroom operations that are outsourced to the country include accounting, human resource administration, claims administration, logistics and medical transcription.

The country is already known for software development and animation.

One of the highlights of e-Services Philippines 2005 is an animation trade show and conference, which the Animation Council of the Philippines (ACPI) said would help cement the local industry's status as a leading animation services provider.

The ACPI is an organization of animation companies in the

Philippines that specialize in 2D and 3D animation.

The Philippines is fast emerging as an important destination for outsourcing assignments from global animation studios such as Walt Disney Pictures, Hanna Barbera, Dreamworks and Cartoon Network.

Some of the famous cartoons and animations made by Filipinos for foreign firms are Scooby Doo, Tom and Jerry, Addams Family, The Mask, The Jetsons, Dragon Ball Z and Captain Planet.

Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Valuation Date February 3, 2005	Valuation Date February 3, 2005
Philamlife Fixed Income Fund	1.0377	1.0438
Philamlife Equity Fund	1.1563	1.1891

These investment funds are specific for variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission. Daily NAVPU also available at www.rphim.com.

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Banana exporters eye Japan, Middle East

By Christine A. Gaylican

BANANA exporters see a better year ahead for the industry due to increasing demand from Japan and non-traditional markets, such as the Middle East.

Francisco Lorenzo, general manager for plantation and agricultural operations of Lapanday Foods Corp., said in an interview that the Philippines was poised to increase shipments to Japan due to constrained production in Costa Rica and Panama.

The two countries, which are the Philippines' main competitors in the \$70-million Japanese export market, suffered from heavy rains that damaged banana plantations.

Lorenzo said this opens a window of opportunity for the Philippines to increase exports to Japan.

This bodes well for the industry, he said, with world prices steady at around \$3 per 13-kilo box.

Lapanday, majority owned by the Lorenzo family, is one of the top three exporters of Cavendish

bananas, along with Dole-Stanfilco Philippines and the Floreindo family's Anflo Management and Investment Corp. (Anfloco).

Based on production efficiency, the Philippines is the world's second largest producer of bananas, as the Mindanao-based farms efficiently produce an average of 10,000 tons of Cavendish bananas per hectare per year, said Senen Bacani, chair and CEO of La Fruitera Inc., the sixth largest exporter.

Shipment of fresh bananas, particularly of the Cavendish variety, inched up by 3.4 percent to 1.74 million metric tons in 2004, bringing in roughly P2 billion in earnings, according to data from the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (Pbgea) and the DTI.

The growth could be attributed to higher demand from Japan, the Middle East and Hong Kong.

On the other hand, demand from other markets, such as South Korea and China, declined by 8 and 11 percent, respectively, during the period.

PDIC takes over two more rural banks

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PHILIPPINE Deposit Insurance Corp. has taken over two more small banks—Municipal Rural Bank of Del Gallego and Hermosa Savings and Loan Bank—that were recently shut down by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

PDIC announced yesterday it would start servicing today the claims for insured deposits up to the new maximum cover of P250,000 in the RB Del Gallego of Camarines Sur Inc.

Municipal RB of Del Gallego, the fifth bank to be closed this year, has estimated insured deposit liabilities of P5.58 million, representing 483 accounts.

The bank was ordered closed by the Monetary Board last Jan. 27, and the PDIC took over the bank the next day.

The PDIC has likewise taken over Hermosa Savings and Loan Bank Inc., which the BSP ordered closed last Feb. 3.

This thrift bank maintains 14

branches in Bataan, Pampanga and Makati City.

Hermosa Savings has 9,987 accounts with an estimated insured deposit liability of P120.75 million, P106.7 million of which is insured.

It was the sixth bank to be closed this year.

Depositors of RB Del Gallego were advised to proceed to the closed bank at Poblacion, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur where PDIC representatives are stationed to service claims for insured deposits until March 2.

After March 2 this year, depositors may file their claims personally or through mail at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, PDIC Extension Office, SSS bldg., Ayala Avenue corner VA, Rufino St., Makati City, the PDIC added.

Depositors are required to submit the evidence of deposits, such as savings passbook, certificate of time deposit, or bank statement including unused checks and two latest identification documents in the processing of deposit claims.

iBank '04 earnings up

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank (iBank) posted an unaudited net income last year of P522.6 million, up 20.7 percent from P433 million it recorded in 2003.

The income increase came on the back of a 19.4-percent increase in iBank's total assets to P52.4 billion from P43.9 billion in 2003.

Total loan portfolio went up by 20.3 percent to P21.7 billion, while deposits were 10.2 percent higher, ending 2004 at P39.5 billion from P35.8 billion a year earlier.

For the year, iBank set aside an additional P265.5 million in provisions for probable losses.

This and the increased loan portfolio level brought its net non-performing loans ratio to 7.8 per-

cent from 11.2 percent in 2003.

Non-performing assets were at 8.7 percent of total assets from 11.8 percent the previous year, below the commercial banking industry average in November 2004 of 13.6 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively.

iBank reported a return on common equity of 11.4 percent.

"While we are quite satisfied with our 2004 performance, we expect better results in the coming years as we gain further economies of scale. We intend to continue to focus on our target markets and differentiate ourselves through our brand of customer service," Ramon Y. Sy, president and chief executive officer said.

STOP SCAM, GRAFT, CORRUPTION!

The attendees of the recently concluded FRAUD PREVENTION AND DETECTION seminar that was held at AMCHAM were from PNP, NBI, IBANK, CBCP, Robinson's, AP Phils., Morato, PLDT, Smart, United Lab, Raymundo Pawnshop, UCPB Gen Insurance, Equitable PCIB, Globe, Clientlogit, Convergys, KPMG, Cocolife, Paramount Life, PSMBFI, etc.

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People, Events & Products

Students vie for honors at Intel science fair

THE NATIONAL Finals of the Intel Philippines Science Fair 2005 kicks off today with the theme, "Exploring Genius," a subject that is apt for a country blessed with an abundance of talented youth. A total of 97 Filipino high school students will take part in the competition at the Bahay ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines. The competition starts today and culminates with awarding ceremonies the following day. The participants will be whittled down to 10 national winners who will represent the Philippines at the Intel International Science Engineering Fair (Intel Isef) in Phoenix, Arizona in May 2005.

An annual competition aimed at fostering a love of science and innovation among high school students, the Intel Philippine Science Fair selection process starts from the division level, progressing through the regional, then to the national level. All national Intel Philippine Science Fair entrants are chosen through a selection process lasting from September through December of every year. Its rigorous selection process is key to making the Intel Philippine Science Fair among the Philippines' most prestigious science competitions for the youth. Intel Philippine Science Fair entries may fall into both individ-

ual or team projects, and students may choose to focus on either of two major fields of studies: physical or applied sciences.

Winning research projects have ranged from anti-venom developed from locally grown plants, to a remote thermometer and biological sensor. "The competition attracts kids with a penchant for exploring the possibilities offered by science and technology," says Yvonne Garcia-Flores, education manager for Intel Technology Philippines.

Among the most notable Filipino winners of the Intel Philippine Science Fair is Joy Anne Aquino. Joy was on her third year at the E. Rodriguez Jr High School in Quezon City when she went to Oregon to compete in the Intel Isef in May last year, won fourth place in the grand award for medicine and health, and was awarded the first prize by the American Veterinary Association. Her project, which focused on isolating the anti-microbial component of sea-snake venom, bested more than a thousand others from across 40 countries competing in the prestigious event.

"Entries such as Joy Anne Aquino's tell us that Filipino students have a great inclination towards innovation in science and technology, which should give great hope for the future

of our country," Flores notes.

The Department of Science and Technology helps in the nationwide coordination of the event. Intel Philippine Science Fair is supported by the ABS-CBN Foundation; Netopia Internet Café; UP Chemistry Alumni Association; Natural Products Society of the Philippines; and the Semiconductors and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc.

Intel Isef has been sponsored by Intel since 1997. The Intel Isef is the world's largest pre-college science competition showcasing the world's most promising young scientists and inventors. The students competing at Intel ISEF emerge from a worldwide field of several million science fair participants. They then go on to compete against over 65,000 students at more than 500 regional Intel Isef-affiliated science fairs around the world to win the right to attend the Intel Isef.

The fair has been administered for the past 55 years by Science Service, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the understanding and appreciation of science among people of all ages through publications and educational programs. For more information about Science Service and the Intel Isef, visit www.sciserv.org.



TBN-ASIA SUPPORTS CABLE CONVENTION 2005

Trinity Broadcasting Networks-Asia (TBN-Asia) throws its full support to Cable Convention 2005 by signing in as one of the gold sponsors of the event organized by the Philippine Cable Television Association Inc (PCTA). Shown signing the sponsorship contract are (from left) Antonio Flores,

CEO-liaison officer-Asia, TBN-Asia and Allan P. Dungao, overall convention chair and PCTA director. Looking on are (standing, from left) Stanley Uy, president, TBN-Asia, Tony V. Selda, president, PCTA, and Neil Cabalonga, executive assistant, TBN-Asia.

Mirant, AIM to continue Mindanao partnership

MIRANT Philippines and the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) will continue with its joint program to help government bring lasting peace and development to Mindanao.

Mirant Foundation executive director Roberto Calingo announced that the "AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides," an innovative approach to bringing progress to the region, is marking its 1st anniversary this February.

"We are committed to continuing this fruitful partnership with AIM that has benefited many Mindanao leaders during the past year, enriching their skills with the end in mind of bringing development to the region," said Calingo.

Mirant celebrates the occasion with AIM by holding a fellowship session with civil society partners as well as by launching the "Mirant Bridging Fellows Program" this month at the AIM grounds in Makati.

The Center has conducted a series of seminars and workshops for leaders in Mindanao to properly equip them with the needed skills and leadership insights to

bridge societal divides, especially in conflict areas in the region.

Among those that have been trained by the center are local government officials, civil society groups and community leaders.

The Center, the first of its kind in the world, utilizes a non-traditional approach to development, says Calingo. "It is important to imbue a leader with the specific qualities needed to succeed in a complex cultural environment as Mindanao," he points out.

The Mirant Bridging Fellows, a program under the AIM-Mirant Center, will involve a search for qualified individuals from the private and public sector who will be given a study grant under a program formulated by AIM, which will center on bridge leadership skills.

"Through this partnership with AIM, we in the private sector are doing our best to help government improve the situation in Mindanao. From our collective experience, we see that this is the best way we can do it as what the region needs are leaders who are properly trained in bridging cultural divides," said Calingo.



BANKARD, GAWAD KALINGA BUILD HOMES

Bankard Inc recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Gawad Kalinga to formalize its participation in the latter's program to provide decent housing for the urban poor. The partnership also marks the soft launch of Bankard's 'Rewards for the Soul' campaign. The campaign gives Bankard cardholders an opportunity to use their rewards points for a noble cause-to help build homes for the less fortunate under the auspices of Gawad Kalinga. All they have to do is simply call Bankard's customer service at 888-1-888 to convert their rewards points to a donation. Shown signing the agreement are Bankard president and CEO Joven D. Reyes and Gawad Kalinga Community Foundation Inc executive director Antonio P. Meloto.

Product FILES

Crosswind Sportivo 'drive to thrill' program kicks off



THE COUNTRY'S diesel engine technology expert Isuzu Philippines Corp (IPC) has readily offered test drives for the newest member of the Crosswind family-the Sportivo-through its authorized dealerships nationwide.

The Sportivo "Drive to Thrill" program offers potential buyers the opportunity to adequately familiarize themselves with the newest innovation in the AUV category. What's more? All test drivers will automatically be given with a token and an entry coupon for a chance to win a 21" JVC TV (with rack) every month within the duration of the test drive program (Jan. 17 to May 08).

The top-of-the-line Sportivo features large one-piece multi-reflector headlamps, giving an aggressive aura, blazing with brighter illumination for increased visibility during night driving. To impress buyers even more, the rear combination lamp now presents a chic and fashionable look. The sporty six-hole design radiator grille has a distinct characteristic for that rugged and strong bearing. Other outstanding high-

lights include a trendy two-piece bumper and an eye-catching 15-inch new design alloy wheel. To supplement the comfort and convenience aspect, it has Isuzu's exclusive Flex Ride Suspension System-guaranteeing a smooth ride without sacrificing stability and safety. In addition, the Sportivo brings the motorist closer to the SUV experience with the Twin Bucket Seats for the driver and passengers of the first and second row with improved cushioning support for increased riding comfort. Other distinct features of the Sportivo are the Lever Type Handbrake Handle, Center Console with Integrated Cupholders, DVD Entertainment System and Front Facing 3rd Row Seat.

Make the Sportivo connection now. Visit authorized Isuzu dealerships nationwide. In Metro Manila, Isuzu dealerships can be found in Edsa Balintawak, Quezon Avenue, Commonwealth, Pasig, Manila, Makati and Alabang. In the provinces, Isuzu dealerships are located in Isabela, Pangasinan, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, San Pablo, Bacolod, Mandaue, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

Free medical consultation from Better Herbs

BETTER Herbs Inc, maker of Leizenzi (Better Sleep), Banaba-Ampalaya and Choleste-Redux natural food supplements, recently launched a free medical check-up-service for all as part of its corporate mission. It is making its medical director, Dr. Ramos Angeles, available for no-fee consultations on sleep disorder, poor blood circulation, prostate cancer and other ailments.

The public service schedule is on Mondays and Tuesdays from 2

to 5 p.m. at Unit 1033, VV Soliven Building Edsa, San Juan.

Better Herbs Leizenzi and Choleste-Redux are available at Mercury Drug, Watsons and other leading drugstores while Banaba-Ampalaya can be bought at Watsons and other leading drugstores.

Last year, the company received the Asia Pacific Excellence Awards for its Leizenzi (Better Sleep). The food supplement was cited as an innovative product for insomnia.

FLEHD's 5th annual confab

THE FOUNDATION for Lay Education on Heart Diseases Inc recently held its 5th National Annual Convention on Preventive Cardiology with the theme "The Practicing Physicians and Preventive Cardiology" Jan. 27 to 29 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium of RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Among the featured topics were "Coconut Oil: The Philippines' best weapon in the fight against atherosclerosis" by Dr. Conrado Dayrit, and "Ayuveda: an alternative approach to diabetes mellitus with special reference to cardiology" by Professor Dr. K. Chandrasekhar of Malaysia. The opening ceremonies celebrated the 5th anniversary of the foundation, with awards given by chair Jose Concepcion to 18 pharmaceutical companies who have strongly and unconditionally supported the projects and special events of FLEHD. An oratorical contest involving the different medical schools on the theme "Preventive Cardiology: Its time has come and act we must now" capped the convention. Entertainment numbers were provided by the Philippine Ballet Theater, the UP Medirhythms, mezzo soprano Jai Sabas Aracama, pianist Jimboy Callisang, Drs. Antonio Chua, Ricky del Fuerte, Cesar Flores, Marge Malabanan, Consolacion Botin, Cesar Yap, Dante Galbines, Richard Arceo, Maricris Cristobal and Ronnie Maramba.

Quick stop at Mongolian Quick-Stop

MONGOLIAN Quick-Stop opens at the level 1 East Wing of the Robinsons Galleria Mall, Ortigas, Quezon City on Feb. 18 at 10:30 a.m. After the blessing, the cutting of the ceremonial ribbon will be done by guest of honor Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski and his wife Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski.

Mongolian Quick-Stop is the newest and most exciting Mongolian fast food service restaurant. You'll experience the goodness of eat-all-you-can Mongolian food, plus other delectable dishes prepared and cooked fresh everyday. Other delectable dishes include pastas with an Asian twist, rice bowls, tasty barbecues, teriyaki and szechuan meals in affordable prices yet truly filling. The secret is in the sauce. Mongolian food and other Asian fusion dishes with the best sauce mixes you'll ever taste is served in just minutes, real fast!

Mongolian Quick-Stop aims to serve quality and delectable food to suit the varying lifestyles of their customers. Watch as your mouth-watering Mongolian bowl mix is cooked. Whether your lifestyle is busy or not, make a quick stop at Mongolian Quick-Stop for satisfying meals.

Come to the best Mongolian Stop in town where you'll find lots of tasty meal choices, with various flavors, that will keep vegetarians or meat-lovers coming back for more. Make your friends and family happy, dine with them or bring home a Mongolian Quick-box.

Other outlets are located at Festival Mall, Alabang, Food Patio at PBCOM Tower Makati, and Taste Buds Area at Robinsons Manila.

**More PEP
on page B12**

Crude oil keeps steady course above \$47/barrel

SINGAPORE—Oil prices held firm above \$47 a barrel as worries about a possible cut to Opec production curbed fears of a slowdown in second-quarter demand.

US oil prices ticked one cent higher to \$47.45 a barrel after ending 28 cents higher on Monday, staying within their \$45-\$50 range since early January. Brent crude edged down 6 cents to \$45.47 a barrel.

"We may have reached a price equilibrium. I think long-term we are due to go a bit higher—and gasoline is what will take us up—but demand is also decreasing into the second quarter," said John Brady at ABN Amro in New York.

But until gasoline takes over pole position in the oil market this spring, when US motorists prepare for summer driving holidays, dealers are likely to stay focused on the short-term.

Although demand is set to slide into the weak second quarter at the end of the northern winter, the market was bolstered last week by International Energy Agency forecasts showing stronger demand growth and lower non-Opec supply.

Opec's warning of a possible preemptive production cut ahead of the cartel's March 16 meeting has also kept traders cautious, particularly with some producers pointing to a new,

higher price floor of \$40 a barrel for US crude.

"Opec keeps out there the potential for a production cut, which keeps the market well-supported," Brady said.

Venezuelan energy minister Rafael Ramirez said on Monday it was too early for the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to decide whether it needed to adjust production levels at its next meeting.

Last Friday, Opec's acting secretary general Adnan Shihab-Eldin told Reuters the oil cartel might need to cut supply for the second quarter even if consumption stayed robust, and would need a faster, bigger cut if demand were to fall sharply.

Expectations for higher crude oil stocks could keep any price gains in check after the US Energy Information Administration releases weekly petroleum supply data on Wednesday.

A Reuters forecast showed crude oil stocks likely rose last week for the first time in three weeks by a mild 1.1 million barrels, keeping a hefty surplus to a year ago.

On the supply side, Iraq has resumed its northern oil exports after flows were halted by attacks since mid-December, industry sources said on Monday.

Reuters

Asian stocks, currencies eye Greenspan, key US data

SINGAPORE—Asian share markets were flat on Tuesday after getting little direction from Wall Street, while the dollar recovered some strength ahead of key economic data and Fed Chair Alan Greenspan's congressional testimony.

The dollar shook off much of Monday's broad-based selling, but buying was cautious ahead of US capital flows data, which will show how the US is funding its current account deficit.

Asian share markets were little changed from opening levels.

MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian share markets was down 0.13 percent. The Hang Seng Index was unchanged. South Korea's Kospi was up 0.2 percent after the central bank left interest rates unchanged.

In Japan, gains in financial stocks, boosted by recent merger activity, outweighed earnings woes at Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd.

The maker of Subaru cars slumped 3.5 percent after posting a 26-percent drop in nine-month operating profit and cutting its full-year forecast.

The Nikkei average rose 0.27 percent to 11,664.06 in morning trade, putting it on course for its highest close since July 2. But traders saw little room for stronger gains.

"The mood in the US is not encouraging. The indices barely moved and the market turnover fell to its lowest level this year," said Koichi Seki, equity manager at Chuoh Securities. "That would block the Nikkei's rally above 11,700."

US blue chips were pulled lower by Ameri-

can International Group Inc., the target of a widening regulatory probe.

But the Nasdaq got a lift from a 4 percent jump in Apple Computer Inc., which shot higher after UBS raised its price target on the stock.

The Dow Jones industrial average slipped 0.05 percent. The Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.30 percent.

US capital flows data for December is due at 1400 GMT, with some dealers expecting inflows of \$60 billion.

In November, net inflows of capital were \$81 billion, the highest level since June.

Greenspan will give his twice-yearly congressional testimony on Wednesday and Thursday at around 1500 GMT.

His remarks will be watched closely for comments on the US economy, monetary policy and whether he will stand by a recent speech in which he gave what the market saw as a relatively optimistic outlook on US current account deficit.

Japan releases GDP data early on Wednesday.

Crude oil futures were stable ahead of weekly data due later in the day that is forecast to show a gain in US crude stocks. NYMEX crude for March delivery was trading down 1 cent at \$47.43 a barrel on very thin volume.

Japanese government bond yields retreated from two-month highs after a four-day slide in bond prices prompted bargain-hunting ahead of a 30-year debt auction.

The yield on the benchmark cash 267th 10-year JGB slipped two basis points to 1.420 percent.

Reuters

WTO chief says trade talks must start getting tough soon

GENEVA—World Trade Organization (WTO) states must get down to hard bargaining immediately if a 2006 target for a free trade pact is to be met, the organization's chief said on Monday.

"Participants must get down to real negotiations in all areas, meaning real give and take, and they must do this now," WTO chief Supachai Panitchpakdi told a meeting of the organization's Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC).

Negotiators appeared to agree that a detailed blueprint in the key areas of farm and industrial goods trade, with significant advances also in negotiations on services and in other issues, must emerge from next December's ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, he said.

But for the Hong Kong meeting to succeed, the negotiations on lowering global barriers to commerce would have to make significant progress in Geneva by the time the WTO closed for its summer break at the end of July.

"By July, we must be able to judge across the board whether we are on course for a significant outcome in Hong Kong," he said, which in turn meant some "first approximations" emerging from the various negotiating groups by early that month.

The TNC, the umbrella group which oversees the various WTO negotiating bodies, was meeting to hammer out a program of work for 2005.

The WTO's Doha Round, launched in the Qatari capital in late 2001 to give a boost to the world economy, should have been wrapped up by the end of 2004.

But deep differences between rich and poor, particularly over agriculture, hampered progress in the early years. However, diplomats say that 2006 appears a more realistic deadline.

Panitchpakdi said that in Hong Kong, members must agree on specific targets for slashing subsidies and opening up markets for agriculture and industrial goods.

Talks on opening up services' markets, including energy and banking, were still lagging, with more than 40 countries still to offer any kind of liberalization.

AP



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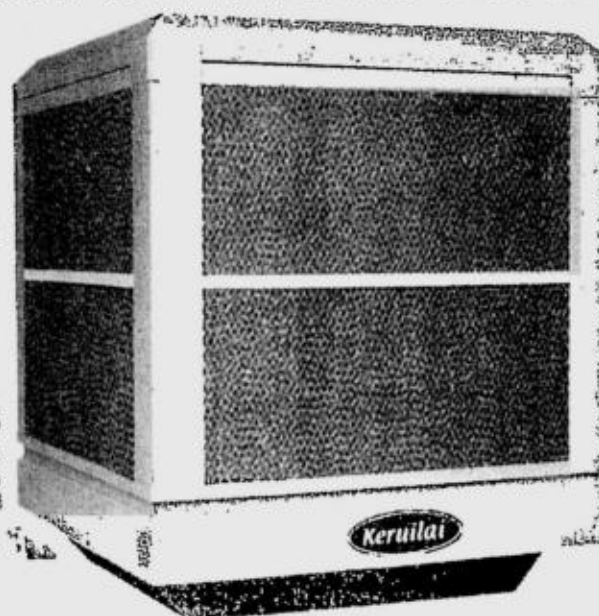
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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
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EASTERN VISAYAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
Tacloban City

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The Department of Health (DOH), through the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) Hospital Bids and Awards Committee (HBAC) hereby invites sealed bids for MEDICAL, SURGICAL, DENTAL, LABORATORY, RADIOLOGY SUPPLIES, DRUGS AND MEDICINES, OFFICE, HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT for the hospital.

Bid documents can be secured by qualified participants from the Hospital Bids and Awards Committee (HBAC) through Mrs. Resurrection M. Das, Chief Nurse, Head, HBAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (Php 500.00) for the bid forms.

Pre-bid Conference, dropping and opening of bids will be held at the EVRMC Chief of Hospital's Conference Room, Tacloban City on the following dates:

- 1) Pre-Bid Conference, March 22, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.
- 2) Deadline for dropping and opening of bidders' eligibility requirements/eligibility check (no price tenders) April 1, 2005 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- 3) Product sample evaluation April 4 to 6, 2005 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- 4) Deadline for dropping and opening of bids:
 - a) Drugs and medicines - April 12, 2005 not later than 2:00 p.m.
 - b) Radiology, Laboratory supplies and reagents - April 13, 2005 not later than 2:00 p.m.
 - c) Medical, Surgical, Dental supplies - April 14, 2005 not later than 2:00 p.m.
 - d) Housekeeping, Maintenance, Office supplies and Hospital Equipment - April 15, 2005 not later than 2:00 p.m.

A bidder's bond in the form of cash or Manager's Check in an amount equivalent to 1% of the approved budget for the contract must accompany each bid.

For particulars, please see Dr. Pablo B. Aniceto, Jr., Chairman, HBAC with telephone number 321-3383 EVRMC Tacloban City

(Sgd.) PABLO B. ANICETO, JR., M.D.
Chief, Medical Professional Staff
Chairman, Hospital Bids and Awards Committee

Noted by:
(Sgd.) ADELAI DA AMARGA-ASPERIN, MD, MHA
Chief of Hospital III
Head, Procuring Entity

*Reference time - hospital buddy clock

(PCI - Feb 16 & 23, 2005)

HOW TO GET FROM BINONDO TO THE WORLD.



BUSY CALLE ROSARIO, THE TRADE HUB OF BINONDO IN THE 19TH CENTURY. NOW KNOWN AS QUINTIN PAREDES ST., IT REMAINS TO BE A PREMIER BUSINESS ADDRESS.
TO THIS DAY, THE MALAYAN INSURANCE COMPANY PROUDLY HOLDS OFFICE IN THIS EVER-FAMOUS DOWNTOWN SPOT.

DON ENRIQUE T. YUCHENGCO,
FOUNDER OF CHINA INSURANCE & SURETY, INC. IN BINONDO, MANILA,
WHICH WAS LATER RENAMED MALAYAN INSURANCE COMPANY, INC. IN 1949,
IN A PORTRAIT BY NATIONAL ARTIST FERNANDO AMORSOLO IN 1950.





MALAYAN IS A COMPANY BUILT ON WORD OF HONOR.

IT STARTED WITH A HUMBLE VISION IN AN ACCESORIA ON GANDARA STREET IN 1930.

ENRIQUE T. YUCHENGCO BUILT AN HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY NON-LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY IN THE SERVICE OF HIS YOUNG COUNTRY.

A DEFINING MOMENT WAS IN POST-WAR MANILA WHERE MALAYAN PROMPTLY SETTLED CLAIMS OF COUNTRYMEN AFTER THE RAVAGES OF THE WORLD WAR.

THROUGH THE YEARS, MALAYAN CARRIED ON WITH GENUINE OPTIMISM, EVEN IN THE FACE OF NATIONAL CRISES AND TRIALS. STEADILY, MALAYAN EXTENDED NOT ONLY IN KEY CITIES OF THE COUNTRY, BUT ALSO IN THE CAPITALS OF THE WORLD.

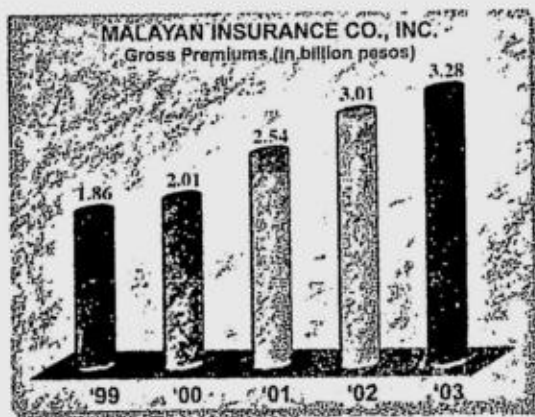
MALAYAN IS NOW LISTED AS ONE OF THE TOP 200 GLOBAL NON-LIFE INSURERS, AND COUNTS ON THE SUPPORT OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST REINSURANCE COMPANIES FOR THE NEEDS OF THE PHILIPPINE INSURING PUBLIC.

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AMBASSADOR ALPONSO T. YUCHENGCO, CHAIRMAN OF THE MALAYAN GROUP OF INSURANCE COMPANIES, WAS INDUCTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE SOCIETY (IIS) HALL OF FAME IN 1997. HE WAS ALSO THE FIRST ASIAN TO BE RECOGNIZED WITH THE IIS FOUNDER'S GOLD MEDAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE.



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Pinay provides support for Japan's IT industry

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

FEW people know that Filipino engineers piloting application development support Japan's powerful thriving information technology industry. One of these engineers is Marilyn Marquez. She is presently systems engineer and analyst of Asia Solutions Philippines, Inc., a company that engages in Internet services, web hosting, software development and networking, wireless and wired solutions. The Philippine-based company has a group of bridge system engineers that acquire system development jobs from Japan and develop it locally. As systems engineer, Marquez is assigned in Japan to develop applications and learn how the Japanese develop and maintain the required applications.

Lost in translation

Like most system engineers, Marquez's job covers all aspects of software application development. She spends several months in Japan for every project. As systems engineer, she starts with data collection in Japan before converting requirements to technical documentation. Sounds easy enough for any systems engineer but the problem is most of the requirements are in Japanese. For most projects, Marquez acts as the bridge systems engineer for the programmers in the Philippines. She translates requirements from Japan to basic design, detailed design, unit tests, combination tests and system integration test. For her team to understand the requirements, sometimes Marquez has to do the translation word for word. "Translating technical documents requires a lot of time. But if the one doing the translation has

ALL ABOUT WORK



enough technical background, that he or she recognize the image or the idea the document conveys or how the information in the document were arranged, direct translation is not necessary," shares Marquez. Depending on the complexity of the project and the resources available, sometimes Marquez also handles program coding.

Skills and training

Marquez is a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics degree holder from the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Although her degree helps her in the area of logic and analytical thinking, she still had to take up several IT courses to prepare her for the position of systems engineer. She took up several programming languages, learned the UNIX fundamentals, attended Oracle certification seminars and mastered many other technical courses in different countries.

Aside from the technical background, the position requires her to be constantly updated on the newest technology in the market. "I believe that the IT industry evolves constantly and in a very fast phase. The current phase is not as fast as during the Internet boom," says the bridge systems engineer. According to Marquez, with technology constantly changing, one has to be patient in looking for the best solu-

tions or alternatives.

"Good background" in engineering, math and science can also go a long way. And like any other career, good communication skills." Although Marquez is well versed in Turbo C, Java and other structured query languages, there was one other language that she needed to master—Japanese. Before she was immersed in the corporate culture of Japan, Marquez underwent six weeks of training for language and orientation. Although it was meant to help her adjust in the new environment, Marquez was unprepared for the life that was waiting for her in Japan.

Different discipline

"I have been to Japan thrice already but my last travel to Japan was the most difficult. Though I have gained a lot of experiences, and met a lot of people from different countries, it was the first time that loneliness crept into my skin. I think that's the number one problem every overseas worker or student must learn to handle," shares Marquez.

Homesick and lonely, Marquez also had to deal with the new work environment. Every day, before work, employees participate in a 15-minute stretching and exercise routine. Morning assemblies are also quite different. Aside from the typical meetings, employees are also constantly reminded of the company's guiding principle through recitation. According to the initially bewildered Marquez, the Japanese workplace is often austere and quiet. Often, she says, the silence lends a bit of tension to the atmosphere. But this she took all in stride and eventually benefited from the discipline.

On top of the strict discipline, Mar-

quez also had to contend with a corporate environment outnumbered by men. In the department where she had her training alone, there were only four women out of the 54 employees. "I think that Japanese women are a little meek and quiet. So I just follow how these women behave so as not to hurt any sensibilities," says Marquez.

The actual work stress is another story. The job requires tons of documentation. Marquez partly attributes this heavy workload to ISO certification. "It is my first time to be in a working environment where ISO standards are strictly implemented. My working habits did not change much, except for the documents. I would rather do basic design creation, coding and testing than create sentences describing the system in detail. But I believe that creating these documents is very beneficial to the life cycle of the project." However, she claims she does not have the luxury of time and therefore the task can often become a burden. "Most clients want results they can see and actually play with rather than papers that they can only read. Sometimes, they cannot picture the final image of the application. It is a basic problem scenario for an application developer here or abroad."

Simple pleasures

In spite of the demands, Marquez embraces her job all for the love of creating new things. "I also enjoy the challenge of learning new technology and taming the beasts of stress and difficulties," she claims. The opportunity to travel, the substantial financial returns and the small perks are only icing on the cake. Canteen meals in Japan for example are often subsidized. The



MARQUEZ

apartment wherein Marquez stays whenever she is in Japan is provided for by the company.

Even utility bills are taken care of by the company. Working several months in Japan, this is a great factor for her. "Bottom line, I am able to save which I won't be able to do if I am working in the Philippines," claims Marquez. She also commends Japan's clean air and efficient transportation system. For these simple pleasures, one would often find Marquez on weekends singing in a church choir praising God for her blessings.

How do you set goals at work?

DEAR WW: I achieved my first goal—I got the job. Now it's time to set some new ones. But I don't even know where to begin. Can you help me achieve my new goal?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner



even worse, to get sucked into pursuing goals that aren't yours. That's why it's so important to pull

back and really reflect on who you are, where you want to be going and what is the best way to get there. Take the time to reflect on an ongoing basis and don't let yourself off easy.

Do you write down your goals? As I write this, I'm looking at a computer monitor that has "ha-ha" and "a-ha" written on it. Those are the goals for everything that I do for Working Wounded, each column or speech has to contain both humor and insight. So I speak from experience on this one. Writing them down makes them tangible and hard to forget. Do you describe the desired outcome? Most of us think of our goals in negative terms—I'll stop interrupting people, stop whining or stop being late with my projects. But it's always best to phrase them positively, because it's more effective to remind yourself of the behavior that you want to incorporate into your work or personal life.

Are they measurable? Keeping your goals nebulous robs you of the opportunity to see your progress toward achieving them. That's why it's im-

HOW/B11



MY TRABAHOMATCH LAUNCH

Pressing on a giant mouse, executives of five partner companies, together with Department of Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima (extreme left) and Undersecretary for Workers' Welfare and Protection of the Department of Labor and Employment Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio, Jr. (second from left) open the mytrabaho.com web site of My Trabaho Match. My Trabaho Match is the second component of My Trabaho, a public service program that helps Filipinos find their dream jobs. Representing their companies are (from right): Quantum X managing partner Robert John Oh, Manila Broadcasting Company president Jun Nicdao, Optimus Innovations chair Juan "Babs" Reyes, Philippine Daily Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto, and STI Executive Committee chair Eusebio Tanco.

BETOY JOHNSON

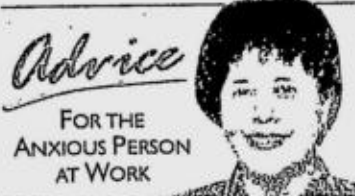
'My main problem is financing!'

By Tita Datu Puangco

I HAVE READ many of your articles and find them admirable because you have been able to help many people. You mentioned that your company allocates 10 percent of your resources for small and medium enterprises who may not be able to afford your regular fees. I wonder if I qualify among the 10 percent.

I have a 14-hectare farm in Baras, Rizal, which is planted with 1,500 mango trees, 800 of which are already fruit-bearing; 700 mahogany trees (15 years old); 200 jackfruit trees; 2,000 banana trees; and 10,000 pineapple plants.

My main problem is financing because the farm is without water since our single deep well broke down one year ago. The farm is under the agrarian reform program and cannot be used as collateral. We have been harvesting the sweetest mangoes you will



Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK

ever taste for four years now, but the last two harvests have yielded small fruits because of insufficient irrigation.

When I started the farm in 1989, I had another source of revenue and I must have spent roughly P1.5 million over 16 years for the farm's development—then I ran out of money after I had to close my other business. I don't know how to raise funds to put the finishing touches that would make the farm profitable. I don't know why the government and/or banks cannot lend me money despite the fact that I have mango trees, mahogany trees, etc. that should be good enough as collateral. Will you

take me on? Thank you and God bless.

Farm Entrepreneur

Thank you for writing. I can appreciate your dilemma. My family also owns a farm planted with mangoes and I can appreciate the investment you have already made. I also recognize the importance of water and irrigation and your need to have a dependable water supply.

One time I sat beside an expert in building maintenance. He noticed that in our country we have many beautiful buildings but they are poorly maintained. I understood that we have to set aside a budget for maintenance especially for the equipment most valuable to our business. In this case, it is your water equipment.

It is ironic, isn't it that you can't avail of financing for the property. Based on experience I know it would be difficult getting financing from private banks but have you actually applied with government banks? My cousin several

years back tried to apply with a unibank for a loan for a tilapia farm. His farm is in Tarlac and at that time the bank did not believe that you can grow a tilapia in a landlocked area, meaning your land is not beside the sea or a river. I also know that Land Bank took a risk on him, now he is highly successful and his business profitable. I hope the government banks reading this letter can take a look at the feasibility of lending to our "Farm Entrepreneur."

But let us say traditional bank financing is not open for you, why not get a business partner who can put additional equity into your business? One such partner is the person or company buying your mangoes or pineapples. Or if you don't want to dilute ownership, why not get an advance from them? In our province, some buyers are willing to give an advance that is then billed against collections come harvest time. I also hope this let-

MY MAIN: B11

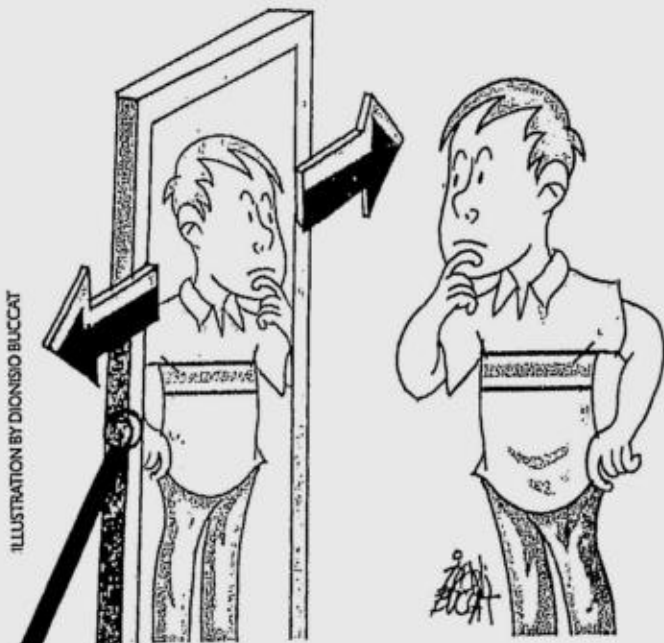


ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCAT

Intel employees find new meaning in volunteerism

By Ernie O. Cecilia
Contributor

HOW many times do you hear employees say that they can't find meaning in their jobs? How many people at work have left well-paying jobs to look for their passion elsewhere? How many of them continue to drag their feet to work, in search of something that will ignite their passion and make their work truly meaningful?

Fortunately, some are blessed with good intentions and are given the right opportunity to be of significance and make a difference—not for themselves, but for others.

Marcos Canovas, an Intel Philippines employee of 28 years, takes great pride in working to help others. "Knowing that in your own way you help build a community is a great gift," says Canovas who was among the first 50 employee volunteers for community work.



INTEL Involved team

Amateur volunteers

He is part of the original team of a handful of amateur volunteers who help bring opportunities to people in the communities where Intel operates. Today, nearly 80 percent of all Intel employees (4,041 volunteered in 2004) have signed up as Intel Involved volunteers.

"Since the early '80s, we were already giving free technical training to out-of-school youth in Bangkal, Makati City. We also help them and their families find alternative sources of income," narrates Canovas.

Canovas and the 4,040 other Intel employees have found meaning in doing volunteer work—without any remuneration for this extra work. They engage in reforestation, traffic and safety training, and even feeding programs to improve lives and communities.

RP is best among Intel sites

Chona Ignalaga, Intel's community relations manager, toasts local employees

for its 80 percent participation, the highest across all Intel sites worldwide with an aggregate average of 30 percent to 50 percent participation. She says, "It is so inspiring to see so many employees setting aside their personal time for volunteerism activities. In fact, the aggregate hours spent by the Philippine site employees in volunteerism have exceeded 100,000."

"Volunteerism is a glue that binds us all in Intel," says Cris Gallardo, a senior technician at the microprocessor assembly and test factory. "Intel is such a big company and we hardly get to know everyone. By getting together to engage in helping others, we strengthen our Intel family as well."

Canovas and Gallardo, like other volunteers, are active from planning to implementation to evaluation of projects in any of these key areas: traffic and safety, outreach, education and training, health

and environment.

Volunteerism its own reward

"We don't expect extra compensation from volunteerism. But we gain a lot in terms of developing our leadership skills, self-esteem and sociability," says Lira Rival, another Intel veteran volunteer. "The shy ones among us tend to develop character, win more friends and ultimately become good leaders of people," Rival continues.

Rival's 10 years of volunteer work "is its own reward," she says. "It is a deeply meaningful experience. The appreciation of the people whose lives we touched is priceless."

Intel volunteers even involve their families in some of these volunteer projects. It is not surprising that the sons and daughters of retired Intel volunteers now carry on the legacy of volunteerism that their parents started.

Ignalaga says, "Intel Involved aims to

help in the progress of the communities we call home. Through employee volunteerism, we aspire to be a genuine partner in community and national development."

Intel Inside, Intel Involved

Intel Inside has truly made a new turn—it's also Intel Involved. Employee volunteers are now fast becoming an integral part of countryside development in General Trias, Cavite. In cooperation with the municipal government, Intel Involved volunteers implemented traffic and road improvement projects, medical and dental missions, first aid and safety training, nutrition and other programs, especially for the indigent communities.

Environmental awareness is also a core thrust of Intel Involved. Tree planting and coastal cleanups, waste management, and environmental preservation training are top priorities of Intel In-

involved over the years.

Since Intel is known for leadership in education and information technology, its employee volunteers continue to give massive support to the Intel Computer Clubhouse that provides free computer training for kids, Intel Teach to the Future program, a teacher-training on computer integration in the classroom, and the Intel Philippine Science Fair, a nationwide competition among high school science and math enthusiasts.

In December 2004, Intel was cited (together with Petron and Meralco) by the Philippine Volunteer Services Coordinating Agency. Intel Philippines is also the first country outside the United States to implement the Intel Volunteer Matching Grant Program.

Says Ignalaga, "Under the program, Intel Foundation (USA) will donate \$50 for every 20 hours of employee volunteer work to public schools in General Trias, Cavite. Due to the efforts of our employee volunteers, beneficiary public schools in the community will receive a substantial donation this year."

Due to the tremendous impact of Intel Involved in the Philippines, local employee volunteers are now being tapped by such Intel sites as Mexico, Korea and Japan to share with them the Philippines' best practices on volunteerism. "Our ultimate goal is to make volunteerism a way of life," says Ignalaga.

Truly, Intel Involved volunteers have proven time and again that there is a difference between being successful and being of significance. People at work can be successful in whatever they do, but success can be made more significant when it benefits others.

(Mr. Cecilia is president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a human resource consulting firm. He writes the "Ask Your Career Counselor" column in Sunday People at Work twice a month. Send feedback to ec4u@edsamail.com.ph)

Work on your unions and work your way up

WAS awakened last night by a text from my cousin, Dona Tumacder: "Sorry to wake you up. I'M GETTING MARRIED!" It was a little past midnight, a little past Valentine's Day. Seems like David Esteban, her boyfriend for the past two and a half years, had popped the question on the last minute of the "day of hearts" (ang baduy niyo, David! Haha!). Everyone knew it was coming—David's been a fixture in family gatherings since he and Dona started dating. Everyone was endeared to him at once—his funny laugh, his love for kids, his ability to take the brunt of me and my sister's teasing and jokes, right down to: "So, you play in a band. What's the band's name?" David: "Sound." Purposely awkward pause. Ali and I: "That's original."

Seriously: Dons, David, I'm so happy for you guys. May God bless you with all the happiness in the universe!

Good unions

Good unions—in love and in the workplace, don't just happen. They need a lot of work, a lot of conscious effort. And when they end (I learned this recently), remember that they weren't "failed" relationships: they were relationships that flourished for a time—and then ended. They were allowed their space in the sun, and when the heavens decided that they had done their role, they stop. Ideally, they die away with grace—but sometimes, the noise of this world and the demons in our head don't allow a quiet death. The ends are loud and crazy and ugly and painful. And sometimes it takes another good union—finding God, getting a new job, meeting a new partner—to silence the noise and make things sane again.

I am thankful that in my work history, all my relationships ended gracefully. This is because I was blessed with good-hearted superiors who genuinely cared for their staff. Like People At Work's Editor Reggie Reyes does in this issue of Working Mom magazine, I'd like to pay tribute to the bosses who gave me lessons that helped me carve my career and keep me aiming for the next level.

Cha Rondael. When I was a "lowly" junior PR assistant at Triple-V

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan



(junior na, assistant pa!), I wrote her a long, long letter of my angst at wanting to be a writer, blahblahblah. I was ready to jump ship and go freelance, but she stopped me. "Get at least two years' experience first, and then you can try to freelance," she said. I was frustrated when I heard it, but it came back to me after I had been with the papers for indeed, two years, and people were coming to me for extra jobs. By that time, I had familiarized myself with different types of writing and developed the discipline for fast writing and deadlines. Ma'am Cha reeled me in from the arrogance most new graduates are afflicted with and told me to just stay put. Gather stuff you have to know. Arm yourself. Then go.

Dinah Ventura and Gaby Mañalac. My first newspaper job was in The Business Daily, whose lifestyle editor was Dinah, and its publisher was Gaby Mañalac. Coming from a film course, I knew zilch about headline writing and editing. Dinah used to sit me down beside her during closing time to point out to me what part of my story wasn't needed, how to follow a style, how to angle a story. Some writers are apprehensive to have this done to them, and I've never understood why. Sitting down with your editor is probably the utterly most masochistic, but most helpful, thing you can do for your career.

Mr. Mañalac, who I miss terribly, used to treat us out at Ilustrado and Alliance Francaise. What's stayed with me about Mr. Mañalac was his generosity and respect for the dignity of others. I'll never forget the day I learned that he had hired M, even though M had admitted in his interview that he had just come from rehab. I don't know of many people who would take this risk, but Mr.

Mañalac did, and M turned out to be indeed a talented and prolific reporter.

Mr. Mañalac trained us so well that business reporters from TBD went on to become senior reporters of this paper (Elena Torrijos, Doris Dumlaog) and editors of others. He was also very strict about maintaining the integrity of our profession. You want a surefire way to lose your credibility? Be on the take. And watch yourself disappear into oblivion.

Sari Yap. Yup, I was a Mega girl. From '97 to '99, I had the privilege of working with "the big three": Sari, Lorraine Belmonte, and Liza Ilarde. I remember attending the opening of a club in Makati, and there was a long line at the buffet. I expected Sari to have herself waited on like the rest of the VIPs, but there she was, right at the end of the line, waiting for her turn.

Sari's humility and "realness" despite her achievements is something I'll always admire. When I was with them, I used to spend a lot of time in her office ("the fishbowl," we used to call it), talking about my career path, religion and, yes, fashion. One lunch break, though, she said something that over the years I've pondered on, wrestled with, and have finally understood. We were talking about the end of the world, the shaking of the spheres, and whatnot. "I'm not afraid to die," she said. The faith she showed was so unshaken, it shook me.

Level up

But I guess that's what a good teacher—such as An, my boss now; or even Jesus Christ—does. He shakes up your comfort zone and shows you new perspectives to consider when living life, tackling a job, or raising a child. Then when you take action, a union—a partnership or mentorship—ensues. Embrace it, welcome it. Let it flourish. Then prune it, weed it, water it, and give it some sun. And when it ends, remember, it's not game over. It's, merely, on to the next level.

(Gina Abuyuan is editor in chief of Working Mom magazine. Feedback is welcome at gina_llanes@abs.pinoy-central.com.)

'My main problem is financing!'

From page B10

ter is read by mango exporters who may be capable of helping you in terms of financing.

Another way is to use your other properties that may not be under the land reform program as collateral. Often, we have idle property that we are not optimizing. Instead of using your own money, use

one of your properties as collateral for the amount you need to develop the water system. As an entrepreneur myself, at first I did not want to use other properties because I was afraid to take this risk. But weighing the possibilities of the profit to the business, I realized the business can easily pay the amortization on the loan so I went

for it. In this manner, my business has expanded.

I will ask one of our consultants to give you a call. Meanwhile, take care of your farm and all the best to you.

(Ms. Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

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How do you set goals at work?

From page B10

portant to be specific; for example, "Each week I'll contact three people from my Rolodex" instead of "I'll do more networking." Do they have a deadline? Let's face it, most of us need a deadline to get anything done. It's no different with your goals. Are they realistic? Goals that are too easy or impossible to achieve

effectively aren't goals at all. You've got to try to hit the careful balance—not so easy they don't get you anywhere, not so hard that they wear you down.

Use these tips and you will keep your goals fresh while quenching your thirst for achievement.

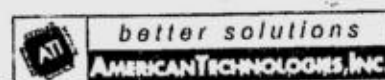
Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: Which best describe

your goals?

—My goals are very important, 39.8 percent

—My goals are just one factor, 34.9 percent

—What goals?, 25.2 percent (Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)



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THE DOCUMENT COMPANY

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People, Events & Products

Animation festival at The Podium

ANIME enthusiasts will have the rare opportunity to play interactive games, see the Gundam Museum, watch animation films from Japan and France, and meet top Japanese animated film directors Nobutaka Nishizawa and Osamu Kasai up close at the 2nd Philippine Animation Festival from Feb. 17 to 19 at The Podium.

A joint project of the Animation Council of the Philippines, the Embassy of France, the Center for International Trade, Expositions and Missions (Citem), and The Podium, in cooperation with Smart Communications, the festival is a celebration of the country's flourishing animation industry. Other sponsors include Toei Animation and TK by Toy Kingdom.

With "Local Content, Global Market" as its theme, it also aims

to be a venue to encourage new business ventures and co-production agreements between international studios and local animation houses.

The festival will be highlighted by the presence of Nishizawa and Kasai, who will fly in from Japan to grace the festival on Friday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. at The Podium's Lounge Area.

Nishizawa's works include the international phenomenon movie and television series hits "Slam Dunk", "Crying Freeman", "Dragon Quest", "Galaxy Express 999", "Legend of the Dragon", "Mazinger Z Movie", "Patalino Stardust", "Sekai Meisaku Dowwa", "Shonan Bakusoku", and the "Adventures of the American Rabbit", which he co-directed.

Kasai's works, on the other hand, have included the im-

mensely popular "Ai Shite Night", "Dragon Ball GT", "Kitaro", and "Sally the Witch", which appeared in TV series and movies. He also directed Tongari Boushi no Memoru, "UFO Robo Grendaizer tai Great Mazinger Movie", and "Rennyo".

Enthusiasts can also look forward to Animation Interactive at The Podium's Lounge area on Feb. 17 and 18. They can preview the making of "Sinbad" and "Shrek" at ICS-Hewlett Packard's exhibit, as well as a preview of animated shows using InFocus projectors from American Technologies Inc.

Gundam fans can check out the Gundam Museum by Bankee and TK by Toy Kingdom. "Gundam", which began as an animated science fiction series in Japanese TV in 1979, has since evolved into 9 TV series, four videos, 10 movies,

and countless novels, comics, and original video game adventures. It also has produced a wide range of Gundam merchandise both for young and old.

The festival's film component will showcase animated feature films from France, Japan, and Nickelodeon's TV shows at The Podium Cinema 2 on Feb. 18 and 19.

"Corto Maltese", the French animated feature film from director Pascal Morelli, will be showcased on Feb. 18 at 5 p.m. and on Feb. 19 at 9 p.m. Another French animation film, "Anney", will be featured on Feb. 18 at 9 p.m. and on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m.

The Toei Animation of Japan showcase is a treat for anime fans. These include "Dragon Ball" on Feb. 18 at 7 p.m., "One Piece" and "Sailor Moon" on Feb. 19 at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., respectively.



OSAMU Kasai's 'Dragon Ball'

Not to be missed is popular Nickelodeon's TV shows on the big screen. These include the big-hearted, sea-dwelling "Sponge Bob Square Pants" on Feb. 18 at 2 p.m., as well as ghost-fighting hero "Danny Phantom" on Feb. 19 at 2:30 p.m.

Century Park Hotel celebrates Chinese New Year with Tai Chi



THE CENTURY Park Hotel's main lobby was the venue of the Tai Chi Spring Festival held Feb. 13. The festival was organized by Century Park Hotel in cooperation with the Century Tai Chi Association. To

celebrate the onset of the Chinese new year of the rooster, the association demonstrated Tai Chi-mental, physical and spiritual exercise that promote health and well being and are considered medicinal

and therapeutic in nature for the guests present at the hotel's main lobby. Shown are members of the Century Tai Chi Association and Buddha Light International Association.



MARIANO Tanengilan (2nd from left), chair of the Century Tai Chi Association, is shown with, from left, Albert Teh, president of Buddha Light International

Association), Venerable Master Yung Jao and Agnes Uyongco, former Buddha Light International Association president.



THE 13 steps of Tai Chi, as demonstrated by Michael Ong, William Lee, Ernesto Lim, Romy Dy, Richard Ong,

Rufina Yu, Alex Go, Joey Go, Apollo Tan, Maria Go, Dewey Yu, and William Co.

PHOTOS BY JOSEPH AGCAOLI

Anos Fire Truck: At par with world's best

A NEW breed of fire fighting equipment is now playing the streets of Metro Manila and the provinces to save the day for lots of Filipinos, particularly victims of destructive fire as well as to enforce the government's Fire Prevention Campaign. But this time, the equipment, a fire truck, will be wholly and thoroughly manufactured by Filipinos, for the Filipinos.

The Anos Fire Truck, a product of the ingenuity of its inventor Alfredo Moreno Anos Sr, is state-of-the-art firefighting equipment that is being manufactured by Anos Research of Quezon City. As a mini fire truck, it's the cheapest in its kind in the world. Its compact size and high strength pumping capability can weave through narrow streets or heavy traffic and direct pressurized water towards difficult areas.

Anos Fire Trucks are available in Isuzu and Kia models 300, 400, 500, 600 and 1000-gallon capacity. The 1000-gallon capacity is equipped with the foam generator and a gun turret. It can spray up to 120 feet and is capable of doing so even while in motion due to its technologically advanced independent engine pump.

Beyond doubt, the Anos Fire Truck shows the world that truly, Filipino products can be at par with the world's best anytime.

DLSU-M 2nd Scholarum awards

DE LA Salle University-Manila is launching the second Lasallian Scholarum Awards, and annual journalism competition that supports and recognizes outstanding coverage of youth and education. Sponsored by the marketing communication office, the project aims to generate awareness among various sectors, including government and private organizations to be involved in addressing critical issues confronting the education sector. The Lasallian Scholarum awards was initially opened only to print and broadcast journalists. On its second year, DLSU-Manila opens a new category for unpublished writers. Winners for all categories will receive cash prizes and a glass sculpture especially designed and executed by noted artist Ramon Orlina. Deadline for submission is June 30. For more information, call 526-4237 or 526-5913.

Foodservers training set

BE A good foodserver in just five days. A basic foodservers training has been set

by MB&G/Proactive from Feb. 16 to 22, 1 to 5 p.m. at Eastwood Citywalk, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. Inquiries are accepted at 687-1787 or 0915-4315375. The course is open to those who would like to pursue a foodservice career here and abroad or in luxury liners and to those engaged in a foodservice business such as hotels, restaurants, resorts, catering and canteens. The training features hands-on workshops in table setting, service, napkin folding and table skirting. Topics also include foodservice behavior, personality and grooming, menu familiarization and merchandising, customer relations and hygiene and sanitation. MB&G/ProActive has been in the business of training foodservice executives and hospitality business owners since 1989.

GSIS on delinquents

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) recently said it would be giving all delinquent housing loan borrowers up to March 31 to update and restructure their loans through its Affordable Rate Reduction and Restructuring Program (RRRP) to avoid foreclosure or cancellation of their housing awards. GSIS Senior Vice President for Housing

and Real Property Development Group Arnaldo Cuasay said the restructuring program is part of the pension fund's thrust to enhance the delivery of services and benefits to its 1.5 million members and pensioners by way of improving its financial productivity through a massive collection campaign on delinquent housing loan accounts. The intensified collection campaign covers all GSIS housing accounts under the deed of conditional sale (DCS) scheme, acquired assets, individual real estate loans, Bahay Ko Program (BKP) loans, Pabahay loans and apartment loans. Under the RRRP, the penalties and surcharges imposed on delinquent GSIS housing loan accounts will be condoned upon payment of at least 10 percent of the outstanding balance as down payment and the submission of all requirements. The balance may be re-amortized for a maximum term of 15 years. The GSIS urged all delinquent housing loan borrowers to immediately report to the GSIS Field Operations Departments handling their accounts and inquire about the full details about the RRRP.



Holcim Awards invites Asian participants

ARCHITECTS, planners, engineers and project owners working in Asia are invited to enter the \$2-million Holcim Awards, a competition in which anyone involved in projects in the area of the sustainable construction can participate.

Three regional awards and additional recognition and encouragement prizes will be awarded in each of five geographic regions in 2005: Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa Middle East, and Asia Pacific.

The Holcim Awards competition promotes innovation in sustainable construction and is now calling for nominations via a dedicated Internet site (www.holcimawards.org). Sustainable construction projects can be submitted for the awards until March 31.

The prize money for the five regional competitions and the global Awards totals \$2 million. Holcim Awards is a competition of the Holcim Foundation for sustainable construction, which is an independent initiative of Swiss-based Holcim Ltd. Holcim is one of the world's leading suppliers of cement, aggregates and concrete.

An advisory board ensures that the activities of the Holcim Foundation are aligned with current interpretations of sustainable construction and frames the architectural, scientific, cultural and policy concerns that should be integrated into Holcim Foundation initiatives.

Two members of the Advisory Board originate from Asia Pacific. Simon Upton is chair of the OECD Roundtable on Sustainable Development and former Member of Parliament in New Zealand. Professor Muhammad Yunus is founder of the Grameen Bank, which successfully developed micro-credit in rural Bangladesh, and is world-renowned for his achievements in implementing micro-credit. He is the author of the book "The Poor People's Banker."

Holcim executive committee member Paul Hugentobler, together with Tom Clough, responsible for managing Holcim interests in Asia Pacific, said the competition is an opportunity for those involved in sustainable construction to be recognized and present innovative ideas to a wider audience.

In Asia Pacific, Holcim Group companies in Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam will take an active part in promoting the Holcim Awards, but entries are welcome from throughout the region.

There will be an awards ceremony in each region in the last quarter of 2005. For Asia Pacific, the ceremony will take place in Beijing, China.

The regional award winners will automatically qualify for the global competition to be held in 2006. At the global awards ceremony in Bangkok, Thailand, an independent jury will announce the three worldwide best projects, exemplary works that are genuine milestones in the advancement of sustainable construction.

To carry out the competition, the Holcim Foundation is working closely with five renowned technical universities: the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), Switzerland; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston; Tongji University, Shanghai, China; the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. These universities will lead the independent juries in their regions.

The universities have also assisted in defining the five "target issues for sustainable construction" and the evaluation criteria for the competition. Descriptions of these criteria are available at www.holcimawards.org. Entries for the Holcim Awards competition can only be submitted via this website.

More PEP on page B-6

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PLEASE NOTE: NO SLIPPERS/SANDALS, NO SLEEVELESS SHIRTS, NO SHORTS, NO SMOKING, NO VIDEO/CAMERA, NO CHILDREN - WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE AUCTION PREMISES
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Republic of the Philippines
NUEVA VIZCAYA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bayombong 3700 Nueva Vizcaya

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
The Board of Regents of the Nueva Vizcaya State University formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the NUEVA VIZCAYA STATE UNIVERSITY is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Dr. Salvador H. Escudero III.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Filipino citizen
- Preferably a holder of a doctoral degree
- Preferably between 40 to 60 years old but not more than 60 at the time of application
- Must be morally upright
- With recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe and industry
- With at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants should make a full disclosure of all administrative, criminal and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines and are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation
- Ombudsman
- Sandiganbayan
- Civil Service Commission
- Previous Employer

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed curriculum vitae and certified supporting documents
- Proposed Vision, Mission and Thrust of the University
- Results of the neuro-psychiatric examination conducted by any Government physician or any accredited health institution
- Medical Certificate from a government physician

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents not later than March 18, 2005 to:

The Office of CHED Commissioner SATURNINO M. OCAMPO, Jr.
c/o MR. MARLON N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
CHED, S/F, DAP Bldg., San Miguel Ave.
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

or

Mrs. BELLA B. RUMBAUA
Board Secretary V
Nueva Vizcaya State University
Bayombong Campus
Bayombong 3700 Nueva Vizcaya
Tel. No. (078) 805-1421
Fax No. (078) 321-2112
(PDI - Feb. 12 & 16, 2005)

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

05-1/JG-001
Annual HOR Health Care Program for the FY 2005
House of Representatives, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
The House of Representatives, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Annual House of Representatives Health Care Program for the Year 2005
Location	House of Representatives, Constitution Hills, Quezon City
Brief Description	Comprehensive Health Maintenance Service Program for Members of the House of Representatives, House Officials and Permanent Rank and File Employees
Approved Budget for the Contract	P13,651,535.25
Contract Duration	April 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005
Delivery Period	April 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A). The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Feb. 16 - Feb. 24, 2005
2. Pre-bid Conference	February 28, 2005
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements; Technical and Financial Proposals/Opening of Eligibility, Technical and Financial Envelopes	March 14, 2005
4. Bid Evaluation	March 14, 2005
5. Post-qualification	March 21, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Seven Thousand Pesos only (P7,000.00) to the House of Representatives Cashier. The complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents may be obtained at the (Bids and Awards Committee-Secretariat) Office of the Procurement and Supply Management Service, South Wing Extension, c/o Mr. Dominador M. Gamboa, BAC-Secretariat Head (Tel. Nos. 931-5683 & 931-5001 loc. 7523 & 7398). Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals shall be placed in separate and marked sealed envelopes addressed to Atty. Leonardo B. Palicte III, Bids and Awards Committee Chairman, c/o the BAC-Secretariat and dropped in the bid box located at the Conference Room, Deputy Secretary General for Internal Audit, South Wing Basement, House of Representatives, National Government Center, Commission Hills, Quezon City. Deadline of submission and receipt of sealed bids shall be on Monday, March 14, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. The House of Representatives assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) ATTY. LEONARDO B. PALICTE III
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Feb. 16 & 23, 2005 Second Invitation)

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PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED MUNICIPAL RURAL BANK OF DEL GALLEGO (Camarines Sur), Inc.

1. The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Municipal Rural Bank of Del Gallego Inc. (MRBGI) on Wednesday, February 16, 2005.

2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of MRBGI where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives from February 16 to March 2, 2005, during office hours, Monday to Friday.

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS BLDG., Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Manager
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
2228 Chino Rocas Avenue
1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

- Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
- Two (2) latest identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

Other documents maybe required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the last day for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Municipal Rural Bank of Del Gallego (Camarines Sur), Inc. is on January 27, 2007. After January 27, 2007, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
(PDI-February 15 & 16, 2005)

OBITUARIES

The PMMA Class 1992 mourns with the Banta Family and loved ones for a life so short and well spent yet tragically ended

To a Bunkmate who devoted his life to uphold faithfully the fine tradition of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy,

Captain Walfredo "Wally" H. Banta
MM, PMMA Class 1992

We will miss you.

To all government and private organizations concerned particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs, OWWA, POEA, and OSG-C.FSHARP: We appeal to all of you to use all resources at your disposal in swiftly concluding the investigation behind our brother's untimely passing.

We call on our fellow PMMA Alumni to join us in remembering Wally in a mass for the eternal repose and justice of his soul on February 17, 2005 (2000H) at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel in Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be at Manila Memorial Cemetery on February 19, 2005 at 1300H.

MA. ROSARIO "MARICHU" MANALO-TORGERSEN

Oslo, Norway
March 15, 1954 - February 12, 2005

Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 50.

Wife to Lars; Mother to Monica & Martin; daughter to Ricardo (T) and Cristina; Sister to Marisa, Marivic, Morites, Menchie, Tisha, and Cindy.

We request you to join us in prayer in celebration of her homecoming to our Lord.

Masses will be held daily at Presentation of the Child Jesus Church, BF Homes, Parañaque City and Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Shrine, Posadas Avenue, Muntinlupa City.

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Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

So Dearly Remembered
On her First Death Anniversary
We Miss and Love MOMMY
LIGAYA R. ESPIRITU
Who died on February 16, 2004

Masses will be offered today, February 16, 2005 at La Loma Cemetery at 10:00 AM and will be officiated by Rev. Fr. Medardo E. Ong and at the following:

- ESPIRITU SANTO PARISH CHURCH, Sta. Cruz, Manila 6:00 AM
- STO. NIÑO PARISH CHURCH, Tondo, Manila 7:00 AM

The Family and Close Relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

The Board of Directors and Members of the
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mourn the peaceful Death of
our Honorary Member

Walter Kuehne
Member since 1928

who passed away on Friday morning,
11th of February 2005 at the age of 98 years.

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OBITUARIES



In Loving Memory

of our Dearly Beloved

Ret. RTC Judge NARCISO
DIOKNO SALCEDO

of Taal, Batangas and Pagsanjan, Laguna
 Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 14, 2005

His bereaved and ever loving spouse, RTC Judge Zorayda Herradura Salcedo; sisters Soledad (†), Belen (†), and Caridad (†); brothers Atty. Rafael (†) and Col. Vicente (†);

- Sisters in-Law: Rosalia Magno vda de Salcedo, Salvacion Cruz vda de Salcedo, Dr. Erlinda H. Jajurie, Zorahayda H. de Leon.
- Brothers in-Law: Dr. Basil H. Jajurie, Gerardo R. de Leon.
- Nephews and Nieces: Romulo S. Moreno, Ma. Purisima S. Teotico, Ma. Gracia S. Aranda, Ma. Stella S. Martinez, Ma. Teresita C. Salcedo, Gabriel C. Salcedo, Ma. Lourdes C. Salcedo, Leo Ernesto C. Salcedo, John Michael C. Salcedo, Dr. Joanne J. Lobo, Engr. Basil H. Jajurie, Dr. Zorayda J. Torres, Atty. Raissa H. Jajurie, Farah May H. Jajurie, Tamerlane H. Jajurie.
- Nephews and Nieces in-Law: Nona S. Moreno, Gerardo M. Teotico, Antonio P. Aranda, Lawrence V. Martinez, Ma. Elenita A. Salcedo, Mabel M. Salcedo, Dr. Rolley Rey Lobo, Dr. Frederick K. Torres.
- Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren
- Josie Aristoque, his dedicated and faithful nursing aide;
- and other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremated remains lie in state at his residence at No. 48 Rizal Street, Pagsanjan, Laguna. A concelebrated mass shall be offered at the Philippine Independent Church, Pagsanjan, Laguna on February 17, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. Interment follows.

Please omit flowers.

In Loving Memory

On the Second Death Anniversary of

GENERAL ROMEO C. ESPINO

Former Chief of Staff
 Armed Forces of the Philippines

December 20, 1914 - February 17, 2003

His loving wife, Belle; children, Leslie and Diana, Ralph and Cristina, Maria Teresa (†) and Ron, Ricky and Maribelle, Helene and Tito; grand-children, Monica and Michael, Richard, Adelaide, Paolo, Rhoni, Julian, Nikki and Giancarlo; great-grandchildren, Francesca, Giana, David and Micaela request relatives, friends and the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for him tomorrow, February 17, 2005 at the following:

St. Michael's Chapel, Fort Bonifacio, Makati 12:15 p.m.
 Holy Child Chapel, Bonifacio Naval Station, Fort Bonifacio 5:00 p.m.
 St. Ignatius Cathedral, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City 5:15 p.m.
 Our Lady of all Nations Chapel, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City 5:15 p.m.
 Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan 6:00 p.m.
 St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish, Magallanes Village, Makati 6:00 p.m.
 Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati 6:00 p.m.
 Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, Poblacion, Makati 6:30 p.m.
 St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa 6:30 p.m.

Avelina "Belen" Aprecio Arambulo

Born in Pasig, Rizal on July 14, 1922.

She passed away peacefully in Sydney, Australia
 on February 13, 2005.

Her body will lie in state at the Sydney Funeral Homes until interment on February 18 at Good Shepherd Cemetery.

Her bereaved children Corazon, Popoy and Tess; Monette; Pete and Marie; Nina and Jun; grandchildren, great grandchildren and relatives request the pious and those whose lives she has touched to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Our "Nanay" will always be loved and missed dearly.

In Loving Memory

On the 3rd Death Anniversary of

B/Gen. Elias G. Lavadia (Ret.)

who peacefully joined his Creator on February 16, 2002

His loving wife Amada Cruz Lavadia; children Sylvia and Jimmy Javier, Tocoy and Wayne Friend, Ramon and close ones request relatives and friends to join them in praying for the repose of his soul.

Holy Masses will be offered at:

St. Andrews Apostle Parish Church 6:30 a.m.
 Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church 12:00 n.n.
 National Shrine of the Sacred Heart Parish Church 6:00 p.m.



The Lord has called back
 one of His dearest angels,

LORENZO ARMAND
ABIVA LEUNG

Born on June 21, 1996,

Renzo made the life of all who loved him full of joy and wonder.



That must have been the only purpose why God gave us Renzo.

For on February 13, 2005, after showering us with eight years
 of his innocence and love; our Renzo left us peacefully.

His remains are at the Christ the King, Chapel A, Green Meadows, Quezon City,
 and will be there until Thursday, February 17, 2005.

In lieu of flowers, we will welcome donations for Renzo's Cancer Foundation.

We love you Renzo!

Emmanuel Rañola Eva

of Oas, Albay and Legazpi City
 January 30, 1924 - February 12, 2005

His late wife Mercedes de Ocampo (+); loving children Pocholo (+) and Alexandra Miguel, Pambi and Bobby Arcangel; brothers and sisters, grandchildren and close relatives request the pious readers to pray for his eternal rest.

His mortal remains lie in state at the Nuestra Señora de Salvacion, Barangay Bonot, Legazpi City.

Interment will be today, February 16, 2004, at the Bicol Memorial Park after the 8:30 a.m. Mass in the Nuestra Señora de Salvacion.

Laurelia Caluza-Valenciano

Peacefully joined our Lord and her husband
 JESUS V. VALENCIANO on February 13,
 2005 at the age of 76.

Her children EDWIN, OWEN, MARILOU
 and POLY, EMIL, ELMER and MINDA,
 ROWENA, PENG, and BESS and JOE; and her
 grandchildren request the pious readers to pray
 for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington
 Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue,
 Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Holy Cross Memorial
 Park, Novalliches, Quezon City on Saturday
 February 19, 2005 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.



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 a fitting tribute
 to your departed loved one.

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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

- 1 Copy of Death Certificate
- 2 Any identification document (I.D.)

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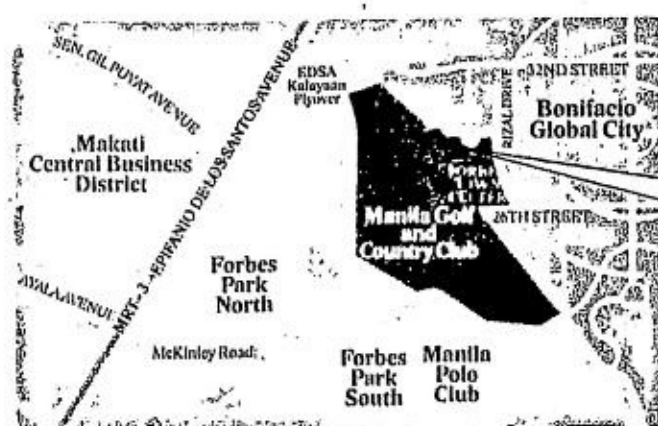
Architect's perspective of Forbes Town Road

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

UK press invites Coty-P to be part of awards jury

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE UNITED Kingdom and International Press Automotive Magazines, Britain's largest group of technical motoring publi-

cations comprising the International Engine of the Year Awards, is inviting Car of the Year-Philippines to join its awards jury.

Graham Johnson, co-chair, World Car of the Year Awards, chair of the International Engine of the Year Awards and editor in

chief of the UK International Press Media and Events—Automotive Magazines Division, sent the invitation via e-mail to Coty Philippines.

Very interested

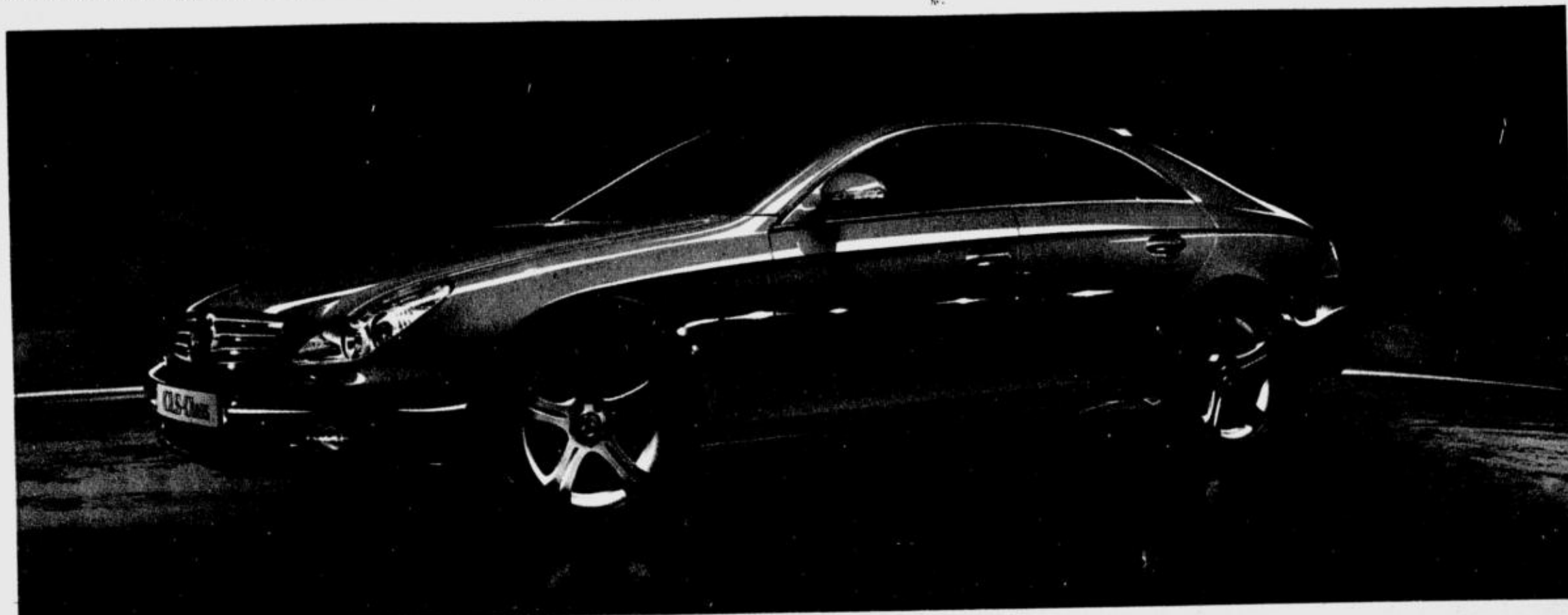
"I am very interested to learn more about your outlets and, subject to satisfying a few require-

ments, and of course jury acceptance, we would like to invite you to join the Awards jury," he stated in the e-mail.

Johnson also said that all their jurors participate for free and that all voting is carried out via e-mail.

"All I need from you is to learn the circulation figures of all your

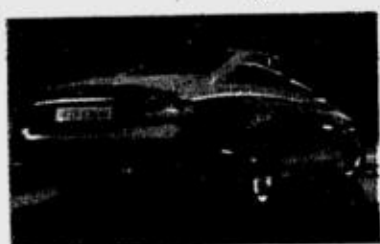
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The frog in the well

NATURE tells us that every new thing usually triggers kinks, if not downright hassles. Birth pains, we call it.

The Northern Luzon Expressway (NLEX) is no exception.

I had foreseen it: Chaos on opening day, motorists raising hell as they make their first taste of an honest-to-goodness highway never before experienced this side of the globe.

But why they had to act the way they did, I am not surprised. The story of mankind is replete with ironies, if not downright madness.

We love to complain instead of using our coconuts before we even start opening our mouths. Who was the guy who said this world is peopled by two sets of persons: 1) The one who speaks first before saying afterward, "What did I say?"; 2) The one who first says, "What am I going to say?" before he starts to speak.

Tell me, to which group did the NLEX whiners belong?

Your answer is as good as mine.

Still, we have to forgive them if they had whined a lot. It is our duty to help them, pull them out of the pits of a mind disfigured by nonsense. The world hasn't seen the last of the frogs who sees the world

FULL TANK



Al Mendoza

only from down below a well.

Sometimes, it takes our goat to still see people not as broad-minded as, say, Mandela, who readily forgave his tormentors and captors after he was released from prison and become the longest-held political prisoner in history—nearly 25 years, I guess.

But these days, I always try to keep my patience. I think age has got to do with it. I have started to re-learn to keep my cool, the way I was when I was in high school—which was only a while back.

Take the NLEX brouhaha opening. Why, as I keep telling friends, it never bothered one bit because I have learned to live with the ways of the world. Me, suddenly, becoming wise to the ways of the world, so to speak?

Maybe, but then, come to think of it, there would always be people who refuse to wake up to reality and stick to their

cocooned selves of madness-induced fantasy. Why some people continue to reject change as a way of life, that thing doesn't rile me one bit anymore.

If helter-skelter could erupt every school year opening, what more with the opening of a brand-new, rehabilitated and expanded expressway like the NLEX, whose high-tech amenities are still as Greek to many motorists like a fax machine is to a caveman?

But then, c'mon, fellas, don't be a poor sport. What we have here is a totally different kind of highway, an engineering marvel, a world-class work of architecture. Some P20 billion had been spent here. This isn't a piece of cake. This is a monumental work of art. We've always wanted change, improvement, well, here it is, given to us virtually on a silver platter. To act like cry babies now should be the last thing that we should do. Some people invested good money, well, let's do our share: pay them with the willingness of Jesus Christ to offer his life for our sins. That's the least we can do.

Let us celebrate instead of gripe. It is not every day that we see and experience the comfort



of driving and riding on a road nearly a hundred kilometers, minus bumps and hassles, minus discourteous personnel, minus fear of thieves and other forms of evil as the new leaders behind the NLEX are hell-bent in implementing round-the-clock security from every nook and cranny of the expressway, "25 hours" a day.

I concede it is a bit expensive. But as I keep saying here, quality is always expensive. There will never be any comparison between the all-new Toyota Hi-Lux and the Kia Pride, or the Pajero and the Multicab, or the Crosswind and the Kulliglig, or the Ford Expedition and the tricycle.

Okay, there is one area where I believe the plaint is valid. It is this: Why don't we just round

off the pricing of toll? Like, from the start up to the end of the expressway, we are being charged P203. Why don't we just make it P200? This is, first, to avoid delay while waiting for our change when we hand in P205 or P210, or looking for loose change to add to the P200. Second, it makes for a faster, hassle-free ride, if you know what I mean.

I heard frequent users would soon get generous discounts. Cheers to that.

In Australia, motorists living near the expressway get big discount—if not virtual free use of the expressway, depending on legislated government resolutions. Perhaps, that can be studied—and later adopted—here?

I like the new NLEX because

it has added a total of 134 new lane kilometers, which is an increase of 45 percent of the old total road, extremely easing traffic congestion virtually at all hours of the day.

I believe the new NLEX will create more job opportunities in both Central and Northern Luzon as the new expressway will become a surefire magnet for investors, both local and foreign.

So, what's your beef with the new NLEX, buddies?

C'mon, calm down. Let's zoom ahead with new vigor instead of bad vibes if we are to attain progress in the new millennium.

Public Service. To our callers, here's the price list of the Isuzu Sportivo—P1,020,000 for the automatic transmission (A/T), P1,020,000 for the manual transmission (M/T). The XUVi is pegged at P1,060,000 (A/T) and P995,000 (M/T); the XUV is at P995,000 (A/T) and P940,000 (M/T); the XT is at P790,000 (M/T); and XL is at P720,000 (M/T).

QUOTE ME. Every birth is accompanied by pain. Thus, the NLEX is at present encountering birth pains because nobody can go against nature.

Chevrolet Optra 1.6L boosts sales growth of GM Phils.

GENERAL Motors Automobiles Philippines, the domestic subsidiary of the world's largest automaker, announced that its sales grew by 56 percent in 2004 from 2003 despite the 4.6 percent downturn in the auto industry.

In the year-starter party thrown by GMPh for the Motor-

ing media recently, president and general manager James Lim said total sales of GM Philippines for 2004 increased to 2,810 units from 1,801 units sold in 2003.

Flagship vehicle

"Chevrolet Optra continued to

boost sales for the company with 68 percent of the total sales," said Lim.

The flagship vehicle of GM Philippines in the mainstream passenger car segment is ranked No. 4 in the total lower medium class while the Chevrolet Optra 1.6L model consistently ranked No. 3 in the 1.6L lower medium

subsegment of the PC segment.

Since its launch in August 2003, Chevrolet Optra 1.6L captured significant share in the local automotive market, initiating GM Philippines to introduce a higher variant, Chevrolet Optra 1.8L.

Positive reception

Said Lim: "We are very happy with the very positive reception on Chevrolet Optra. We are optimistic that GMPh can continue to make headway in the industry as we offer the customers combined value and style for their automotive investments," Lim said.

To learn more about the Chevrolet Optra, customers may visit any of the following GMPh dealer networks: GM AutoWorld Makati (867-8183), GM AutoWorld Quezon Avenue (374-1250), GM AutoWorld Shaw (535-4944), Chevrolet Pasig (672-1612), Chevrolet Alabang (771-1206), Chevrolet North Edsa (374-9992 to 93), Chevrolet Pampanga (045-9633333), GM AutoWorld Cebu (032-234-0426) and Chevrolet Davao (082-300-7777).



The real 'V' stands for performance

WITH THE RISING cost of petroleum products and the unstable state of the peso, the new year brings new and greater challenges to motorists. Maintaining your motor vehicle in tip-top running condition, specially its engine, nowadays can be a wallet-busting scenario.

If you must bust your wallet, at least make sure you're spending on well-worth products. For your lubricating needs, look in the direction of Valvoline.

You can't go wrong with Valvo-

line. Its engine oils are made from premium base stock and are formulated to provide extra benefits to engines. The products are always race-tested before being brought into the market to assure consistent quality, in keeping with the words of Valvoline founder Dr. John Ellis: "Quality is never an accident."

Recognizable icon

It is also not accidental that the "V" logo of Valvoline has become one of the most recognizable

icons around the world. It is immediately associated with motor performance. In the top racing arenas, many a winner use Valvoline. Even in the consumer market, Valvoline's commitment to quality never goes unnoticed.

Based on a recent survey of persons responsible for the maintenance of their household vehicles, Valvoline was rated one of the top brands based on "overall quality." In fact, for nine years in a row, Valvoline motor oil is the No. 1 choice of top mechanics ...

and no one knows more about motor oil than mechanics! This is no more evident than in products or service shops that have mushroomed, trying to ride on the wings of popularity of the "V."

Valvoline is the oldest—and therefore safe to say the first—trademark in the entire petroleum industry. That head start in research and development is your guarantee that with Valvoline, you're buying the best! In hard times specially, the best is your most cost-effective choice.

Michelin has the right tire for every car, driving need

IN A WORLD that has become entirely dependent on mobility, modern tires must not only provide safety, comfort and value-add for drivers and their vehicles, they must also perform well in widely divergent and specific applications as well as conditions found all over the globe.

This is the reason Michelin, the world's leader in the world tire market for more than a century, has devoted itself to the unceasing task of developing and manufacturing quality, high-technology products of a consistent quality worldwide.

Fueled by the spirit of inventiveness began over 100 years ago by its founders, Edouard and André Michelin, Michelin innovations have found their way into all tire categories from mountain bikes to aircraft—virtually every vehicle that makes use of tires.

The company has also taken the bold move of "customizing" their tires for driving conditions in different parts of the world.

Tires for Asia

According to Michelin Asia (Singapore) Co. chief representative to the Philippines Rizalino M. Dalangin, the company has employed its vast resources and technological know-how to develop tires that are specially designed for Asia.

Says Dalangin: "Since 2001, Michelin has focused its products to the Asian driving experience. It is important to know that driving conditions differ in different parts of the world. In Asia, specifically in the Philippines, we have hot monsoon conditions coupled with variable road surfaces. Michelin tires developed for Asia are much more adapted for these types of situations as opposed to tires that are developed for Europe, for example."

He points out, "I think that customers should understand the importance of tires. What is crazy is that people can spend so much on a good car, and then compromise on the tires, which are the only things that provide



DALANGIN

the contact with the ground. What is most critical is that customers choose quality tires that will help protect them and their car when needed. If you are choosing your car because it reflects your personality, then you should also choose your tires for the same reason."

Market share

Michelin is now poised to grow its market share in the Philippines through its Philippine distributor, Tiara Commercial and Industrial Corp. and its selected dealers nationwide. It has increased its product range to provide customers with the right tire to suit their car and driving needs.

"If you like comfort and silence, then you should choose our Energy range, which also helps you save fuel. If you are sporty and like performance, then our Pilot range is what you should choose," Dalangin states.

The company also announced that it is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the Auto Focus Automobile of the Year—People's Choice this year. Dalangin says, "We believe this will be a great event to bring the different automobiles closer to the auto enthusiasts in Manila. Michelin has some very exciting plans and looks forward to contributing to the fun and excitement of the event."

In the Philippines, the Michelin Pilot and Energy tire range is distributed exclusively by Tiara.

UK press invites Coty-P to be part of awards jury

From page C1

outlets ... I look forward to the possibility of forging a relationship with you," Johnson wrote.

Latest addition?

If Coty-P—which comprises more than 40 journalists from newspapers and magazines, television, radio and Internet organizations—passes the requirements and gets the nod from the rest of the awards jury, the Philippines will be the latest addition to a worldwide mix of jurors that includes the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Argentina and South Korea. Other countries rep-

resented are Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Holland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, China and Egypt.

Organizers of the International Engine of the Year Awards stressed that they receive no advertising or financial support from any car manufacturer or distributor.

Winners of the last International Engine of the Year Awards held in 2004 were determined by a jury comprising 56 of the most read and experienced motoring journalists from 24 countries.

Members of the judging panel

represent globally recognized media such as the US Car and Driver and Playboy magazines, UK's Car magazine and Australia's Wheels.

Coty-P learned about the International Engine of the Year awards in the first quarter of 2004 through Inquirer Motoring editor Cesar Mangawang.

Its offices are at Abinger House, Church Street, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1DF, United Kingdom.

Johnson, on his part, learned about Coty-P's Car of the Year program in "webcasts" this author sent to the UK International Press Media.

Best engine

Last year, the Toyota Prius Hybrid Synergy Drive (Prius) was declared the Best New Engine of 2004 and the International Engine of the Year.

Prius was dubbed a "truly remarkable engine, (raising) the hybrid bar with a combination of better drivability, more technology and more eco-friendliness."

In 2003, Mazda came out on top with its RX-8 Renesis Rotary unit. Honda also took home three trophies in 2003, one each for its hybrids Insight, Civic and the two-liter S2000.

In 2004, the Honda 1.3-liter

IMA (Civic) won in the Best Fuel Economy category.

Also in 2004, the Best Performance Engine award went to Mercedes-AMG 65 V12 (\$65, CL65). In the Sub 1-liter category, Honda's 1-liter IMA (Insight) won; the Honda 1.3-liter IMA (Civic) won the 1- to 1.4-liter category; Prius, the 1.4 to 1.8-liter category; and the Honda S2000, the 1.8- to 2-liter category. The BMW 2.5-liter (325i, X3, 525i, Z4) won in the 2- to 2.5-liter category; the RX-8, the 2.5 to 3-liter category; and the BMW 3.2-liter (M3) made it in the 3- to 4-liter category. The Volkswagen Diesel 5-liter

V10 (Touareg/Phaeton) took home the bacon in 4-liter-and-above category.

Best automobile

Coty-P itself is in the final leg of preparations for the country's first Car of the Year Awards on Feb. 25, to be held at the Rockwell Tent in Makati City.

The grand event is expected to bring in car manufacturers, government officials and ambassadors from different countries under one roof to witness the unveiling of the best automobile introduced in the Philippines in 2004.

Raising the level of emergency roadside service at the NLEX

IS it possible for motorists to get better service at lower cost? Yes, if the service is emergency roadside service (ERS) and the one providing it is Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), the national auto club formerly known as the Philippine Motor Association. ERS 24/7 has long been one of the best services offered by AAP to its members free of charge within Metro Manila.

Now motorists on the new North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) can also avail of ERS from AAP should their vehicles break down or get into an accident. The higher toll rates imposed by the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) after improving and upgrading the 30-year-old NLEX to world-class standards, are somewhat offset by the lower rates that AAP charges for ERS—lower than the rates of PNCC, the previous operator/manager of the NLEX.

20 minutes

Last September, AAP and MNTC signed a memorandum of agreement whereby MNTC authorized AAP to be the exclusive ERS provider at the NLEX and AAP promised to respond to emergency calls within 20 minutes. "For us, it was the opportunity to provide the right kind of ERS to motorists," says Mandy Eduque, the AAP director who, together with fellow board member Dave Arcenas, set up the NLEX division within AAP. "Looking back, it was clear that the standard of service was not up to par at the South Luzon and North Luzon Expressways. Besides, in other countries like Australia and the United States, it's the Automobile Association that provides this service. From the point of view of profit and loss, it would only be a break-even proposition for AAP. But it was our chance to upgrade the level of ERS at the NLEX and provide this service to a greater number of motorists," Eduque adds.

At the NLEX before MNTC took over, PNCC was charging a flat rate of P1,500 for towing and would tow motor vehicles even if the problem was only a flat tire or snapped fan belt. In contrast, AAP's first priority is to get the disabled vehicle moving again. So AAP would tow the vehicle to the nearest shoulder of the highway and repair it if possible, charging P200 for repairing light vehicles, P300 for heavy vehicles such as buses and P500 for extra-heavy vehicles such as 10-wheelers, container vans and dump trucks.

ON THE ROAD



Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Towing

If the stalled vehicle cannot be repaired on the spot, it will be towed to the nearest exit. AAP charges P500 for towing jeepneys and FX mega taxis, P750 for light cars, P1,000 for heavy vehicles and P2,000 for extra heavy ones. Should the driver or owner of the disabled vehicle want it to be towed to another exit or to his home or preferred auto repair shop, an additional rate of P50 per kilometer for light vehicles, P100/km for heavy vehicles and P200/km for extra-heavy vehicles is charged.

AAP members are not charged for ERS if their cars break down on the NLEX, the same way that they get free ERS in Metro Manila. To give jeepney and bus operators the chance to enjoy this benefit, AAP is offering public utility vehicles operators a special kind of membership. For P500 a year, they get unlimited ERS free of charge at the NLEX.

AAP's NLEX division has nine tow trucks and 88 personnel dedicated to serving the entire 84-km stretch of the NLEX, Phase 1, from Balintawak, Metro Manila to Sta. Ines, Pampanga. Of the nine tow trucks—all of which carry spare parts, extra fuel, water and oil—two are flatbeds capable of carrying heavy vehicles weighing as much as a Ford Expedition, one is heavy-duty and the rest are regular.

Mix

But this mix has to be changed, Eduque notes, because ever since AAP took over ERS at the NLEX at 12 a.m. Feb. 10, the log book shows that emergency calls from heavy vehicles outnumbered light vehicles four to one. This was contrary to AAP's projections. To adjust to the situation,

AAP is leasing another heavy-duty tow truck while waiting for delivery of the new one they ordered.

AAP's projection of receiving around 42 emergency calls a day, however, is turning out to be correct. Its NLEX staff work in three shifts to handle this demand for ERS 24/7. To speed up response time, AAP is looking at strategic locations within the NLEX area where the tow trucks can be stationed. As of now the tow trucks are kept on standby at the impounding areas in Pulilan and Mexico, ready to respond to emergency calls.

Hectic

The first day that the new NLEX toll rates took effect, things were hectic for both MNTC and AAP Motorists who protested that they had not been informed of the higher toll rates caused long lines at the toll booths, thereby delaying AAP tow trucks responding to emergency calls. To make matters worse, Eduque recalls, at around 4:30 a.m. five heavy trucks collided near Bocaue. "It was drizzling and the newly asphalted road may have been more slippery than what those truck drivers were used to," he says. But on the second day, the situation stabilized and AAP's ERS ran smoothly.

Because 100 percent of the NLEX has been resurfaced, all vehicles can travel faster. While this reduces travel time, Eduque points out that it may also bring out problems that did not emerge in old, poorly maintained vehicles during slow driving, such as overheating, failing brakes, bald tires bursting or not stopping on time. So bus and jeepney operators will be forced to improve the maintenance and care of their vehicles—another benefit for commuters and motorists alike using the modernized NLEX.

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.



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Alin ang boto mo?



Own a Volvo 2005 S40 for P399,000 down payment

VOLVO'S new beat continues as Viking Cars Inc., the official distributor of Volvo in the Philippines, offers attractive financing packages for the All-New 2005 Volvo S40.

One can now easily own a brand-new S40 sport sedan for only P399,000 down payment or avail themselves with Volvo's 30 percent down payment, 36 months to pay financing deal. With as low as P47,714 monthly, one can now enjoy superb quality and tasteful design all in one powerful sedan. Another option would be the 50 percent down payment, 24 months to pay at 0 percent interest financing scheme is also available. A two-year warranty also assures Volvo owners of superb quality and reliability from their very own completely built-up European sedan.

Dynamic styling

The all-new 2005 Volvo S40 has a stunningly sleek design and precise performance, giving it an edge among its competitors. Cited by America's Automundo magazine as "Car of the Year," the all-new S40 offers dynamic styling both inside and out. Recently launched in the Philippines with its sportswagon version in the V50, more than 100,000 units were sold around the world.

Genetically coded to give you the safest and most exciting ride, the all-new 2005 S40 boasts of a fuel-efficient 2.4-liter engine driven by 170 thoroughbreds. In-

cluded in the ownership package is the assurance of a 24-hour roadside assistance as well as other free items like the 3M tint and original car mats. No need to worry about your first registration fee as Volvo also takes care of processing and paying for the requirements with the option of looking for a reputable insurance company to serve your needs.

Other financing packages

Other models such as the Volvo S80 can now be availed at 30 percent down payment, 36 months to pay at 0 percent interest. The seven-seater XC90 is now also available through a 50 percent down payment, 0 percent interest, 24-months-to-pay financing package. The all-new Volvo V50 Sportswagon can also be yours at a very appealing 50 percent down payment, 0 percent interest, 12-months-to-pay financing terms.

Previously owned Volvos or any other car can also be used as a down payment for a brand-new Volvo of your choice through VCI's trade-in facility. Simply bring in your vehicle for appraisal and select your cash or financing package and you get to bring home the Volvo you desire.

In Manila, Viking Cars is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and aftersales service center are located at 2272 Chino Rocas Avenue, Makati City, while Volvo Ortigas Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

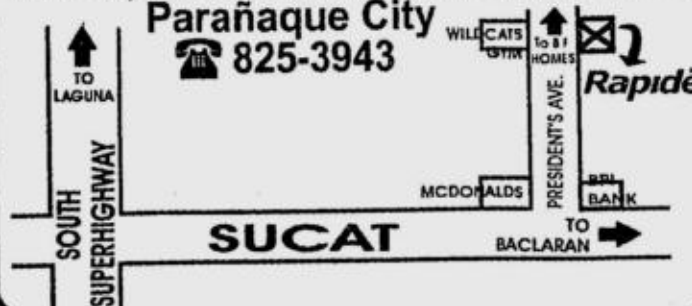
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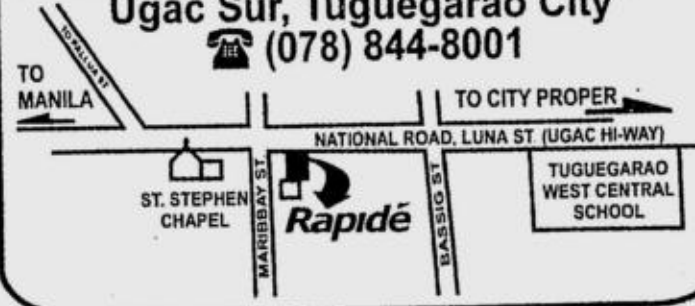
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VOLVO S40

MOTORING

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Forte

HUMAN perception is relative. This double-edged sword is juggled and gamed by manufacturers with the end result of a favorable outcome in mind. Imagine how difficult it is

to make a large section of the population perceive and feel the same sensation and visceral experience. Inconceivable time, resources and life's works are spent for the nod of ap-

proval of an acceptable slice of even the smallest target or niche market.

Imagine this dilemma for a vehicle manufacturer. No two people drive alike. No two people feel a car in the same way. Is it therefore needed that a successful car be everything to everyone? On the edge of a vehicle's performance envelope, characteristics such as chassis balance, throttle steer and traction come into play. The extreme opposite end of the spectrum deals with climate control, seat comfort, audiovisual distractions and space for golf clubs, baby prams and the like. Is there any way to successfully meet at the center without compromise? Is there such a thing as a car with two souls?

CATCH MY DRIFT



Andre Palma

Personal favorite

The answer to this enigma is a personal favorite of mine—the new Volvo S40. Taking full advantage of the years when conservative styling and safety were the hallmarks of the Swedish car manufacturer, the new S40 combines this with a driving edge, though not entirely category busting, is pleasant and fun.

Being a Volvo, we know it is safe. It has to be, right? Assar Gabrielsson and Gustaf Larson, Volvo's founding fathers, would not have it any other way. The world would not be balanced on its axis, if this statement were not dogma. The trouble is that Volvo Cars is now a Ford Motor Co. family member. Information available to the public also points to the fact the three manufacturers under the Ford banner have used a common platform in the development of three vehicles—the S40, the Mazda 3 and the Ford Focus. Does this mean the aegis of safety, Volvo's market-accepted advantage over other brands, has been diluted by design input from Mazda and Ford? Not really.

Safety features

Chassis development was headed by Volvo, and should spell a trickle-down effect of the design's publicly perceived safety factor to the other brands. Genetic similarity seldom breeds the same offspring. The S40 leads its Ford stable mates in active and passive safety features, like wrap-around airbags, excellent safety seats and inertia-activated belts for all five occupants of the vehicle. Chassis stiffness, especially during spirited driving is apparent throughout the three vehicles and can be personally confirmed on the S40 and the Mazda 3. The Focus will have to wait an assessment, and hopefully it should finally arrive in some shape, form and size in the near future.

The engine is pure 5-cylinder, twin-over-head cam, 2.4-liter joy. Never mind that it has a claimed 170 horsepower or 230 Nm of torque, variably available, anywhere from 2,200 to 4,400 rpm, because of a driver adaptive 5-speed automatic Geartronic transmission. The aural experience is top-notch. The sound that the engine makes is best described as a Viking war horn at low rpm. Agitate the throttle more and the confident, low, guttural notes transform into the aria of a chain-mail bikini-clad Nordic Valkyrie—not ear-splitting but frenetic and vibrant. The sound alone moves one to give the throttle just a little more during overtakes and standing starts.

Functionality

The well-behaved chassis and competent engine are reeled in by a Stability and Traction Control system, cutting power to a wheel-losing traction for a split second, allowing it to get reacquainted with the driving surface. Antilock brakes are individually actuated to each wheel and further helped by Electronic Brake Distribution (EBD) and Emergency Brake Assist (EBA), a system that helps you squeeze the most stopping power in near accident situations. If you violently brake and the pedal pressure is not hard enough, EBA provides the right amount of caliper pressure for a safer stopping distance. These three systems are key in the duality of the Volvo S40.

As a car that is relevant to many segments of users, from everyday school shuttle runs to weekend driving toy, the S40 merely proves its ease of use and functionality. These keys to any successful vehicle design are ingrained in basic Volvo design philosophy. Beauty and good design are merely on the surface. What matters most are people and ultimately their safety. Impeccable driving dynamics and undeniable "fun factor" are just value-added features that round out the entire package of this car. Lucky us.



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See posters for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0213 Series of 2005.

NISSAN



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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: Inquirer 2bu name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor



LIFESTYLE

2BU!'S VALENTINE BLOWOUT PART 3

A whole lot of lovin'

2bU! joins the whole of romantic humanity in celebrating February as Love Month. Last week, we gave away over 200 prizes. 2bU! continues to wave its magic wand for the third week. We still have a few surprises up our sleeves. His-and-hers sneakers. More gift certificates.

More presents to win for your loved one. Turn the pages and remember: You can have whatever you see—if you join the Valentine Blowout. Win prizes for your loved one, win prizes for the two of you, win prizes for your single friends or win some for your parents—we want you to celebrate your relationships in the

most beautiful and meaningful ways possible. Because we love you, dear readers, this is our Valentine's Day gift to you. Settle down with our pages, list down what you want to win—you can even choose from last week's prizes—and amaze us with your contest entries. We'll be waiting.

Here's a rundown of prizes you can win

*from the past two weeks of the Valentine blowout

50 gift packs from Wrigley's
30 movie + bowling dates from Eastwood
20 arcade passes from Q Power Station
15 progressive dates at Eastwood
10 gift packages from Russ
10 watches from Time Depot
10 gift packages from Softspot
10 romantic 3-CD sets from Praise Inc.
10 pairs of gift certificates from Urban Spa
10 one-month memberships to Mojo Gym
8 fragrances from Plains and Prints
6 Banana Peel bags
5 P3,000 gift certificates from Red Box
5 gift certificates from China Star
5 gift certificates from Spam Jam
5 pairs of tickets to the Jars of Clay concerts on March 2

5 Lovapalooza goodie bags from Close-Up
5 pairs of tickets from Enchanted Kingdom
5 P2,000 gift certificate from SM Malls
5 lunches or dinners at Banana Leaf Curry House
5 pairs of shoes from Merrell
5 gift certificates from Coffee Bean and Tea leaf
4 gift packages from Shu Uemura
4 fragrances from Lancôme
3 P5,000 makeovers from Maldita
3 gift packages from Bench
3 gift certificates from Lolo Dad's
3 flower and balloon arrangements from Cest Ca Giftworks
3 lunches or dinners at Moksha
2 sets of 5 movie tickets from Greenbelt 3 Cinemas
2 lunches or dinners at Triple V

2 lunches or dinners at Mingoy's
2 special Valentine cakes from BreadTalk
2 overnight accommodations for 2 at the Holiday Inn Resort Clark Field for mom and dad
1 24-hour date
1 P5,000 shopping spree courtesy of Ayala Malls and INQUIRER's marketing department
1 lunch or dinner at Italianni's
1 lunch or dinner at TGIFriday's
1 lunch or dinner at Outback
1 lunch or dinner at Westin Philippine Plaza's longest buffet
1 lunch or dinner at Zucchini's
1 lunch or dinner at Katre
1 hand-painted pendant by Cherie Altea
1 P2,000 gift certificate from And1
1 set of 5 movie tickets from Festival Mall
Books from National Book Store and PowerBooks

Prizes are just four steps away

Here's how you can win 2bU!'s Valentine Blowout



Read all the 2bU! issues in February and pick out which prizes you want to win.



You have two options: You can either send us your love story or a creative expression of love [scrapbook pages, greeting cards, poems, a CD of a song you wrote, a webpage—the only limit is your imagination]. Or both if you really want to.



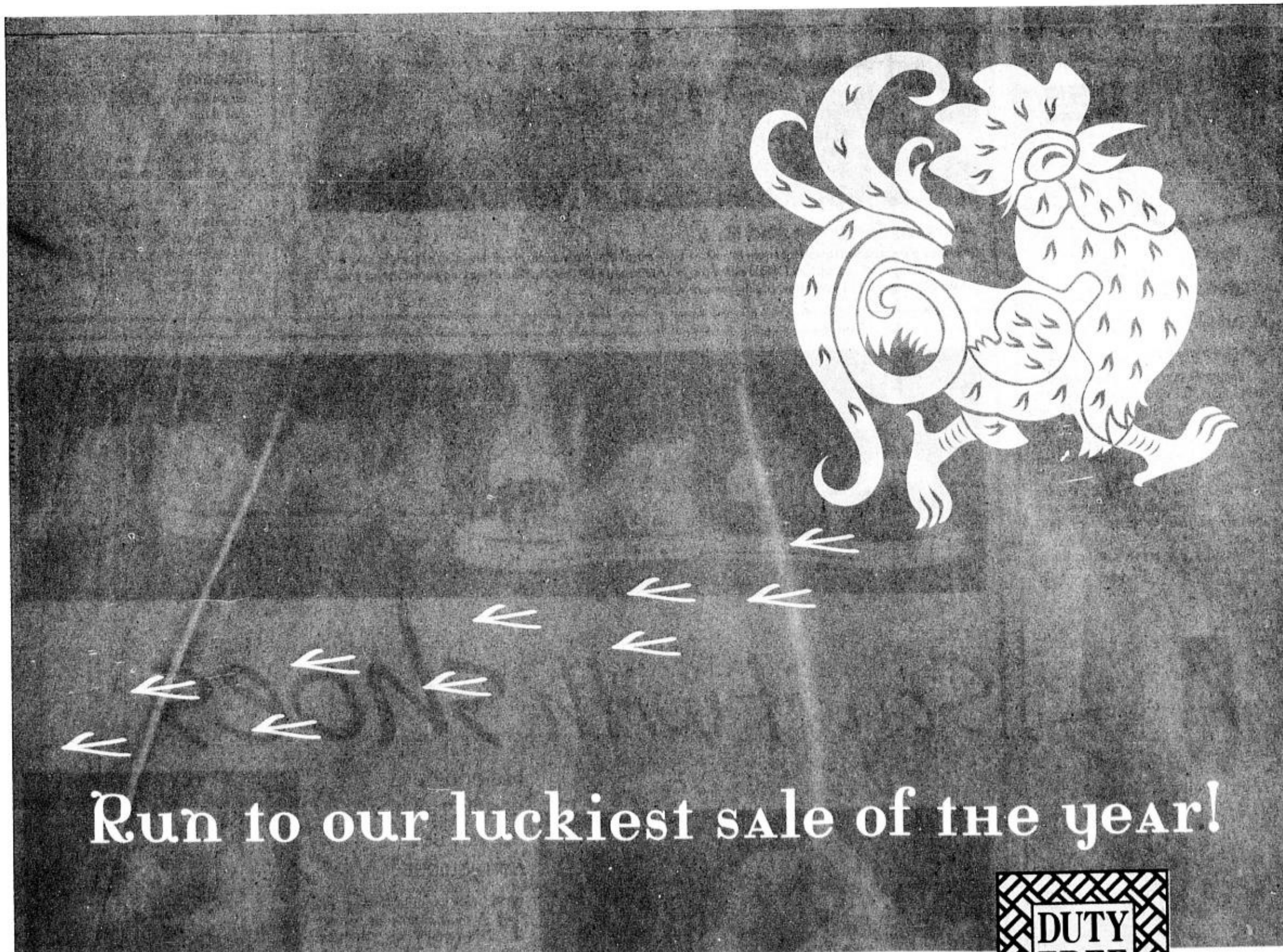
Include a photo of you and your loved one, your name, age, address, school/office and contact numbers.



E-mail your entries to contest2bU@inquirer.com.ph and/or thevalentineblowout@yahoo.com or snail

mail them to Philippine Daily Inquirer building Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets Makati City.

Deadline for entries is Feb. 28. Winners will be announced on this space. Our favorite entries will be published in a future 2bU! issue.



Run to our luckiest sale of the year!

Get up to 80% off in our Year of the Rooster Sale!

From February 1 to March 15, 2005, up to 80% discount on selected fashion, toys, sporting goods, watches, eyewear, housewares and electronics for you and your family to enjoy!

Promo is valid in Fiestamall and Duty Free Philippines Waterfront, Lahug, Cebu City.



Duty

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Sweet treats

If traffic kept you stuck inside your house with no place to go with your date last Valentine's, don't worry—there's still time to celebrate with your special someone even after February 14

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

Zhongnanhai Chinese Bistro

From Feb. 4 onwards, guests will be given a chance to pick up an "Ang Pao" envelope for every P1,000 food purchase on a single receipt.

Prizes include Free Onion Pancake, Poached Pear, or Xiao Long Pao. All free items can be redeemed on guests' next visit, provided they present the winning coupon.

Haagen-Dazs Cafés

Haagen-Dazs Teppanyaki:
4 scoops of Haagen-Dazs ice cream, Cantaloupe and Watermelon balls, diced strawberry jelly, butter-

scotch and chocolate sauce, served with Green Tea milk shake (P488, for 2 persons)

Max Brenner

Magnet, Max Brenner's secret chocolate egg, is for the ceremony of the melting kiss. The idea is for the couple to exchange the egg from mouth to mouth, slowly, until it melts and the sweetness of the filling

diffuses between them. This product is intended as a romantic gift especially for Valentine's Day. Magnet, P220 each, and Sharing, a box of 4 Chocolate Pralines, P250 each.

Max Brenner Chocolate Bar is located at G/F, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City.

2bU! readers get a chance to win gift certificates from the above establishments. Check the mechanics to enter.

We've got winners

These lucky people will soon be slipping their feet into new pairs of Skechers

AFTER sifting through hundreds of mail, here's the short-list of winners of the 2bU!-Skechers promo. These 15 people will receive Skechers gift certificates so they can pick the footwear of their choice.

One of the Boys

Korina Ada D. Tanyu, 19
Talayan Village, QC

Athletic Gal

Abigail Rivera Tud, 18
Marikina City

Teacher's Pet

John Andrew See, 19
Caloocan City

Trendsetter

Aleli G. Roselo, 17

Geek Guy

Eric Anacay
Calamba Laguna

Cheerleader

Anne Silva, 16
Pio del Pilar, Makati City

Prom Queen

Katherine Marie D. Tanyu, 18
Talayan Village, Quezon City

Boy Next Door

Robert Jiao, 13
Tandang Sora, QC

Pretty Spiker

Hazel Shasta Ma. Logan, 13
Pinyahan, Quezon City

Artist

Carlos Miguel M. Lasa, 18
Quezon City

Kikay

Lou Andrea Q. Sison, 18
Laguna

Campus Jock

Anthony Pascom 17
Plainview, Mandaluyong City

It Girl

Marra Lind R. Sarmiento, 22
Pag-asa, Olongapo City

Heartthrob

Arvin Barcelon, 17
Marikina

Party Dude

Leo Glenn A. Gonzales, 17
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

Starting Friday, winners may claim their prizes at Unit 1801 Cityland Shaw Tower, Francis St. corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. Please bring a valid ID. Call 6872692 and 6872649 before dropping by.

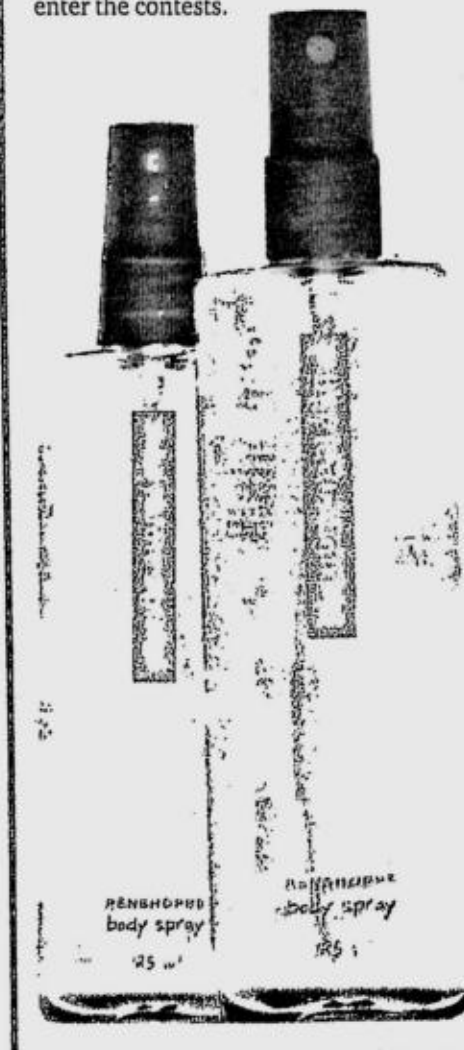


Perfumes from Penshoppe and Oxygen

Penshoppe recently launched two new scents in its "Boy Dates Girl" line. The "Boy" scent (blue) is a mix of green apple, jasmine and cedar. The "Girl" scent (pink) is a blend of citrus and floral notes, including grapefruit, boysenberry and Hawaiian berry.

11:55, a new EDT for girls and guys, is Oxygen's latest scent. It smells fresh and invigorating, perfect for late-nights.

Check out page D1 for instructions to enter the contests.



Win this for Mom and Dad!

Give your parents a break and let them breathe new life into their romance. You can win an overnight stay for two at Holiday Inn Resort Clark Field. Follow the instructions on D1, but instead of waxing poetic about your dream guy or gal, let us know how much you love your parents.



Say it with shoes



His-and-hers sneakers—how cheesy cool can you get?

FORGET splitting lockets and giving half to your partner. The world is not a giant soap opera.

Instead, in celebration of our brothers and sisters in North Asia who love dressing alike, 2bU! and Converse are giving away his-and-hers Chuck Taylors to nine lucky couples.

Join our contest, win, keep one pair for yourself and give the other to your loved one.

Just follow the instructions on the first page. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size!

Pam Pastor





ANKITH of India



JAIME had a hairy time
freaking out shoppers in
Malaysia.



THAILAND'S Natee



"METEOR Garden" girl
lookalike Zhang Yihan



RASYIDIN of Indonesia
must be crazy.



CHINA doesn't like hot
and spicy.



WACKY Macky

Wackiest of the wacky named

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bUI Correspondent

BANGKOK had a convention of wackos last Jan. 22 as MTV held its finals night for the "MTV Whatever Things Show Host Contest" at the Santika nightclub.

On the hunt for that Asian stunt superstar, "MTV Whatever Things" planned in seven national champions to Thailand to execute highly entertaining stunts and basically just go bonkers. The seven won fabulous Philips gizmos plus and had the chance to co-host the final segment of this season's show with giggle-inducing cutie Edison Chen.

Making jaws drop all over Asia, "MTV Whatever Things" is a cutting-edge program jointly created by Philips and MTV in response to Philips' global "Personal Expression" campaign of doing your thing. It is jam-packed with stunts, pranks and daredevil stunts; it's "Candid Camera," "Punk'd" and "Jackass" all rolled into one, but with a dash of Asian flavor. "I think one of the key strengths lies in the fact that it's close to home," says Jacob Mense, Aiya Media founder and co-creator and co-producer. "It's made in Asia, for Asia."

Hosted by VJ's Evan and Nicky, the grand finals saw the contestants stomach disgusting food, perform mind-numbing stunts and brave challenges.

The culinary challenge included a seven-year-old preserved fish with neon green sauce and extra chewy slugs. Indonesia's contestant pretended to loathe our *balut* while China's representative couldn't help but cry because of Indonesia's spicy grub.

For the stunts, India took a bath, Singapore snorted wasabi, Malaysia adorned herself with excess fake body hair and did a lap dance, while our very own representative handed out a bat

Pinoy wins the 'MTV Whatever Things Show Host Contest' to become the region's top wacko



MACKY is the champion.

and invited someone to whack his nuts. His stunt was such a hit that it lured the buffed Aiya Gang members to go onstage to personally kick the would-be winner.

After head bop-inducing performances from Thai acts Joey Boy and Ebola, the winner was announced: Jose Miguel "Macky" Lim from the Philippines.

"He's a complete package," beams Mishal Varma, senior vice-president of programming and talent and artists relations of MTV Networks Asia and one of the judges.

Good looks, gift of gab, presence and the very necessary craziness—Macky has it all, plus a cellphone, an MP3 player and a flat-screen TV set courtesy of Philips.

Stay tuned to MTV this February and witness all the wackiness at the "MTV Whatever Things Show Host Contest TV Special."

E-mail marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com



EBOLA infects the audience with their music

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bUI Correspondent

ARE you the type who would snort wasabi or have his crotch kicked or whacked by a bat just for some attention? Do you get a sense of fulfillment from transforming yourself into a human bowling ball or letting someone punch staples into your nipples?

Well, these guys are, and look at what and where it got them.

It is cuckoo galore here in 2bUI as we present you the winners and contestants of the MTV Whatever Things Show Host Contest.

PHILIPPINES

Jose Miguel Lim aka Macky

Ladies and gentlemen, meet wacky Macky, the winner of the "MTV Whatever Things Show Host Contest."

At 23, Macky's face is probably familiar to a lot of viewers because he has already appeared in several commercials like those for Globe and Breadsticks. He works as the Brand Communications Assistant at a food company and spends his free time sweating it out playing basketball and doing martial arts.

So what exactly did Macky do to represent the country in the competition? "Well, it was pretty lame," he admits. "I just fell off the stage while using the phone."

Well, look at how far the lame fall got him—as far as Bangkok, actually.

So what is next for this loveless hip-hop head? More commercial offers and hosting stunts, surely. But Macky thinks otherwise. "Reality check," he says. "Back to work, man. Back to my day job."

SINGAPORE

Roselyn Cristyna Lee

Ros is 26 and her boyfriend of three years is 41. Now how crazier can one get?

Well, she doesn't really claim to be a cuckoo, but judging from her hobbies and interests, it's quite easy to figure out that this girl is a fun individual who is prone to sudden bursts of lunacy.

For example, she let an ex-boyfriend use her as a canvass back when the then-boyfriend wanted to try permanent tattoos. As a result, she now has the tattoo covered with a tribal butterfly. Oh, and she got a star tattoo too just because this bimbo she saw on video had one.

Back in Singapore, Ros actually works for the army as a performer. According to her, it's her job to boost the morale of the soldiers and spread nationalist pride through song and dance. She even sings and dances Rallion Alonso's "Sampa na sa Rampa" for me just to emphasize her talents.

Runner-up Ros may have lost the chance to co-host an MTV Whatever Things episode with Edison Chen, but with her God-given gift of gab

Meet the wackos

and full-batt mode, it won't take long before this Mutya Bueno-slash-VJ Denise look-alike will invade more eardrums.

MALAYSIA

Jaime Adrienne Lee

One look at pretty Jaime and one wonders what the hell she did to get on a contest such as MTV Whatever Things.

Well, she didn't really puke out her innards or inflict pain on her little frame. What she actually did was strip down to her intimate wear and pose with all these beige mannequins.

And since competition was tough, she padded her bra to resemble Pamela Anderson, much to the delight of perverted mallrats. Not quite satisfied with the shoppers' reactions, the Aiya Gang then made Jaime do Hulk Hogan poses with a wig covering her loins, much to the amazement of the mannequins.

When she's not posing as a mannequin, this 26-year-old cutie helps out with the family business. One day she does sales for their carpets and the next day she is marketing them or even doing the designs.

INDONESIA

Rasyidin

Rasyidin must've had a past life in the Philippines as a comedy actor. Once onstage, this silent type suddenly explodes into a huge ball of theatrics.

He's like Carding (RIP) and Rene Requeistas (RIP) combined, with all those exaggerated gestures and facial muscle exercises he does for the audience. In fact, he looooves pleasing the audience by giving them what they want.

During the food challenge, for example, Rasyidin ate a *balut* onstage—complete with curled lips, crossed eyes and an about-to-vomit look—and then said yum backstage.

Back in Indonesia, Rasyidin, who reminds me of that guy from "Gods Must Be Crazy," lay down in the middle of the street during rush hour, and annoyed a security guard by lifting a garbage can using his teeth.

Sounds like the right man for "Wow Mali" or "Extra Challenge," huh?

THAILAND

Natee Treerattanapitak

Somewhere out there is a person who is shy-ness personified. Natee, on the other hand, is the antithesis of that person. Something's just naturally nutty about him.

Maybe it's the dumb blank look or those eye-catching sideburns that are as long as forever. Maybe it's because he's from another country, or maybe it's just because he really is zany in real life. Whatever the reason, he flaunted this craziness onstage during finals night.

Garbed in nothing but a little hanky that covered his crotch, he just had to let the audience see how the piece of cloth was too little to cover his behind. He then hid behind a strip of cloth that resembled a giant keyboard which covered his front, threw out the hanky, and then danced.

INDIA

Ankit R. Gulechha

When I heard about why 19-year-old Ankit won back in the land of Asha Bosle and vindis, I wasn't really impressed. Suddenly flinging a woman over your shoulders and fleeing from the scene isn't really crazy, if you ask me.

Grand finals night in Bangkok was a totally different thing. For his skit, Ankit stripped down to his old pair of briefs and took a bath. Onstage. In front of all those people. With all those high tech thingles surrounding him.

I was so amazed and afraid that I took several steps away from him, and then cheered. I instantly turned into a fan.

CHINA

Zhang Yihan

Miss China is a very beautiful lady. She looks like ten years old instead of 20, and there's no denying that she resembles that "Meteor Garden" girl.

Due to the language barrier, little communication took place between us, but every single attempt was memorable simply because we didn't get anywhere.

Back in China, what Zhang did to get to represent her country to the "MTV Whatever

Things Show Host Contest" finals in Bangkok was sleep in the middle of a very packed shopping district. In broad daylight, she put out an adorable bed and asked passersby to help her with it.

And that's not all. Glad in pastel pajammies, she asked people to kindly hold basins for her so she can brush her teeth.

Finals night was also extra entertaining because of Miss China. Apart from crying because of the spicy

stuff she had to endure for the food challenge, she also had some costume changes that were undeniably eye candy.

And for her skit, Zhang, wearing a shirt with a flabby body printed on it, lifted dumb bells, used her vibrating Philips phone to massage her body, and then changed into another shirt with a sculpted body printed on it.

And I was like, that's it?

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

ROCK N' HOP

By Dexter R. Matilla
2bUI Correspondent

THE MANILA nightlife is usually made up of two types of music lovers. There are the rockers and there are the hip-hoppers.

But when the two genres of music come together for a whole month of weekend parties, you would then have the best of both worlds.

This is what San Mig Strong Ice, RX 93.1 DJ Rico "the truth behind the booth" Robles, and DJ Shorty has accomplished at Racks El Pueblo for the past two weeks.

"Sometimes going out to bars gets tiring, but this whole month of February I have to go out on the edge and be different," says Robles. "But the weird part was these joints were half rockers, half hip-hop."

So to satisfy both, they put together one monster party that's sure to be talked about for months to come.

On its first week, local bands Pinas and Stonefree rocked Racks El Pueblo while Barely Legal and Session Road took the floor last



STONEFREE rocks the night.



DJ SHORTY with his shorty...

Feb. 11.
Sic City and Mayonnaise will follow it up on Feb. 18, with Delinquentes and Urbanub close it on the final Friday of the month.

"We had a test run, 'Krunk Wednesdays,' last December and January and it was an unbelievable success," says Robles. "People flocked the venue like vultures to prey, by the hundreds. Plus, the people were glad that parties like these finally came about because people had been calling for something that could satisfy fans of both genres of music to get the milk shakin' and the heads bangin'."

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com



THE VENUE



DJ SHORTY and Rico Robles

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Series of 2005.

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will end on Feb
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all Sun users for the
petition in making
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spread of this
message will be
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system upgrade, SUN
CEL users will be
given free P200 load.
Just pass this msg to
10 Sun users. Check
your balance after
doing so.

Sun Cellular sets things straight.

There are text messages using the Sun Cellular name claiming 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited will end soon. There are also false promotional messages circulating that promise rewards for passing them on. These are untrue.

These unauthorized text messages are instigated by certain parties who put their personal and business interests above the consumer's welfare. These fabricated messages have no use but to confuse our Sun Cellular subscribers, raise false expectations and more importantly, congest our network.

Clearly, these said parties do not want the 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service to succeed.

We advise you to please ignore these messages as they are meant to mislead you.

We therefore reiterate that Sun Cellular does not do pass-on text promotions.

For valid Sun Cellular promotions, please call 200 using your Sun Cellular phone or visit our website at www.suncellular.com.ph

We remain committed in providing you with the best value service you deserve in the spirit of fair and healthy competition.

Thank you for your continued patronage.

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2bU! LIFESTYLE

Younger than springtime

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Sara Black

How annoying," a friend of mine said recently, "that we don't get four seasons. Sure, I appreciate year-round sun,

YOUNGER/ E2

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Parents, educators, and specialists will get the chance to...

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- enhance their parenting skills towards their special child
- network with special child-care professionals, knowledge experts and similarly-concerned individuals

A learning event organized by Reedley International School, Philippines, in alliance with Genesis School for Special Education, Singapore.

Keynote speaker **MS. LISA BARRON**, Principal Genesis School.



February 18 2005 (Friday)
8am-12nn (Group 1) and 2pm-6pm (Group 2)
For educators, special child-care professionals, guidance counselors and other specialists

February 19, 2005 (Saturday)
8am-12nn (Group 1) and 2pm-6pm (Group 2)
For parents with special children
Intercontinental Hotel, Makati City.

Workshop Fee is P3,300.00* per head, or P3,000* each for group of five or more
For reservations or inquiries, please contact Monah Austria or Meg Leyesa at tel. no. 671-3799, mobile no. 0917-824-4337, or email reedley_ris@yahoo.com.



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Araneta Coliseum February 24 - 27, 2005

- For a minimum net single receipt purchase of P1,500.00 worth of Bench/Herbench and Bench Body products that includes at least one (1) Bench Overhauled denim, a customer is entitled to one (1) FREE FIRE DANCE TICKET.
- Only one (1) Firedance ticket per customer per day.
- Credit Card and Gift Certificate purchases are valid as long as they meet the minimum purchase requirement.
- Tickets will only be honored as per the show date indicated therein.
- Promo runs from February 15-21, 2005.

Participating Bench Boutiques: Glorietta, Alabang Town Center, SM North Edsa, SM Megamall, Rockwell, Robinsons Galleria, Alimall and Superbench (Market! Market!)

The DTV-NOR Perms NO 9073 Series of 2005



ON EYES: Eye Palette 02 (pink and taupe) and Eye Definer in Black. On lips: lip liner in Vintage Red and Ice Berry Crystal Balm



ON EYES: Eye Palette 02 (silver and taupe) and black eyeliner. On lips: lip liner in Salmon and Ice Pink Crystal Balm



ON EYES: Eye Palette 02 (pink and plum) and Eye Definer in French Navy. On lips: Lip color in Plum topped with Ice Pink Crystal Balm



Younger than springtime

ON EYES: Eye Palette 01 (light pink and mint) and Eye Definer in Black. On lips: Berry Crystal Balm

From page E1

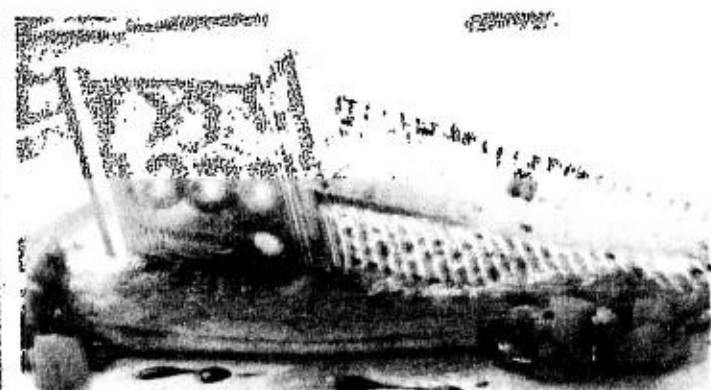
but it takes the fun out of a lot of things. We don't have the playful cheerfulness of spring, or the soft colors of autumn, or the chill of winter to help us appreciate the summer more."

We may not get spring in these areas, but that doesn't mean you can't look as fresh as the season itself—not if The Body Shop can help it.

It recently launched its Spring 2005 make-up collection, dubbed "Get Playful." The line is filled with translucent pastel colors and shimmery glazes, with three new goof-proof products to help even the most naive beauty neophytes nail down that soft, delicate look.

The Spring 2005 Colour Collection is composed of two Eye and Face Pearls palettes, four shades of tinted Crystal Balm, and the Blush Shimmer Puff.

The line is available in stores starting this weekend.



DEBONED grey sole

MANGO tiramisu



Eye and Face Pearls Palettes in 01 (Cool) and 02 (Warm), P1,195 each

The creamy texture of the face pearls allow the product to glide on easily, making it virtually goof-proof. There's no danger of looking like a clown because of the sheerness of the color. However, if you want it to stay on a bit longer, prime the skin with base and set with powder after applying the color.

Tip: use your fingertips to put on the product, so the heat from your fingers will warm the product, thus making it easier to spread.

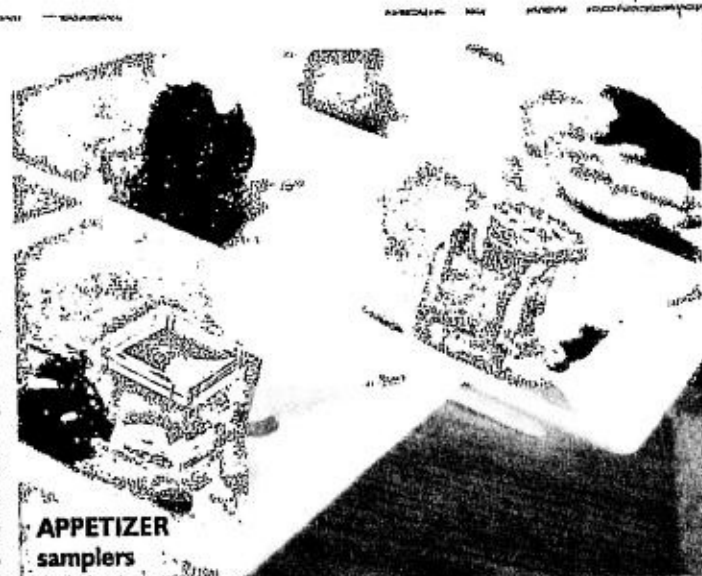
TRIO of oysters (baked, gratinated, and fresh)



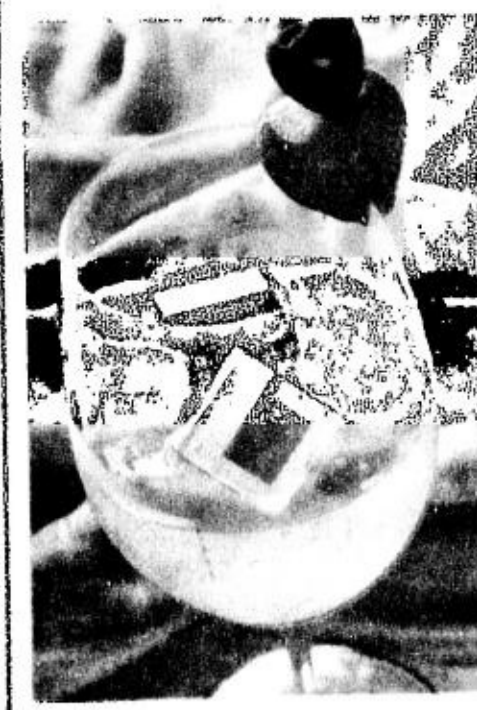
Blush Shimmer Puff, P550

This would make a great blush for fair-skinned girls, but *morenas* needn't worry, as this is a great illuminator and setting powder. The powder provides just enough sparkle without being overpowering, and can be used on your cheekbones and décolletage.

Tip: brush this on lightly over cream blush—it makes the cream stay put.



APPETIZER samplers



CRYSTAL Balm in Iced Pink, Iced Coffee, Iced Cerise, and Iced Berry, P450 each

No dark colors here; all the shades are lightly tinted, with a hint of shimmer. Iced Pink is pearlized pastel, Coffee is caramel-colored with gold shimmer, Cerise is cherry-colored, and Berry is mauve flecked with gold.

Tip: wear these over lipstick for more vibrant color.



ON EYES: Eye Palette 02 (gold and taupe) and black eyeliner. **On lips:** lip liner in Mauve Berry and Ice Cerise Crystal Balm

We may not get spring in these areas, but that doesn't mean you can't look as fresh as the season itself—not if The Body Shop can help it

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Makeup by Argie Linao of The Body Shop.
 Shot at Lolo Dad's, Quirino Ave. Corner Leon Guinto.
 Special thanks to Yasmine Hidalgo.
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 E-mail iidc2005@gmail.com

Ang Pula. Ang Puti. Sa Mendiola Ang Uwi!

San Beda College

2005 Alumni Homecoming

February 19, 2005, Saturday. Alumni Mass at 6pm,
 Bedan Fellowship night follows thereafter!
 Food is catered by TGI Fridays.

The Red & White Ball

February 17, 2005 at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio in honor of the Golden & Silver Jubilarians.

A Salute to the Exemplars of Bedan Excellence

Sports Hall of Fame

- Antonio Carillo (Basketball)
- Cesar Jota (Basketball)
- Angel Dela Paz (Basketball)
- Jesus Marzan (Basketball)
- Ramon Melendez (Football)
- Eduardo Pacheco (Basketball)
- Manuel Zervoulakos (Basketball)

Hall of Fame in Profession

- Ramon Mitra (Award for Legislation)
- Jesus S. Cabarrus (Mining)
- Andrew L. Gotianun, Sr. (Business)
- Antonio Roxas Chua (Banking & Finance)
- Fernando Poe Jr. (Entertainment)

Bedan Achievement Award

- Hon. Jose Carlos V. Lacson
- Benjamin Villacorte (3rd Place, 2004 CPA Board Exam)
- Mohammad Marohombas (8th Place, 2004 CPA Board Exam)
- Saben Loyola (3rd Place, 2004 Bar Exam)
- Mark Oliver Karaan (4th Place, 2004 Bar Exam)

Most Distinguished Bedans

- Robert Dean Barbers (Tourism)
- Robert Lyndon Barbers (Public Service)
- Henry Lee Chan (Business & Finance)
- Edilberto Concepcion (Medicine)
- Eduardo Coseteng (Car-Racing)
- Ricardo Cuna (Entrepreneurship)
- Gonzalo Duque (Education)
- Leonardo Monteverde (Business)
- Genaro Mendoza (Government Service)
- Ramon Posadas (Electric Cooperative)
- Rodolfo Salalima (Law)
- James Sy (Sports Service)

Win a brand new Toyota Vios



Grand Raffle Draw is on February 19, 2005
EXTENDED!
 2005 Homecoming.

A project for the benefit of the San Beda College Alumni Foundation by the 2005 & 2006 Jubilee Batches HS '55, '56, '60, '61, '65, '66, '70, '71, '75, '76, '80, '81

Special thanks to: Eduardo Cojuangco GS'47, Honor Mendoza GS'76 HS'80, James Sy GS'76 HS'80, Johnlee Garcia GS'76 HS'80



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'Kilikili Monologues'

is a brave and humorous look at women's struggles to keep a sensitive part of their body in appealing condition

Text and photos by JR Victorio

FOR DECADES, Filipino women have been engaged in a grand struggle to make their underarms light and smooth. Their deliverance may now be at hand with the "Under-harm Freedom with Rexona Pro Balance," an innovative campaign from Unilever Philippines.

The "Under-harm Freedom" campaign aims to educate women about the consequences of plucking and shaving as well as provide them the solution through the Philippine premiere of the "Kilikili Monologues," a brave and humorous look at women's futile attempts to maintain their underarms and how this takes a toll on their emotional well-being.

Recently, I had the chance to take a peek at the premiere and had a blast watching women talk about yet another sensitive part of their bodies. I even had the opportunity to brush elbows with confident and beautiful under-harm free ladies such as my secret crush, "Extra Challenge" host Marielle Rodriguez, wacky news program Wazzup Wazzup hosts Bianca Gonzales and Bianca Valerio, and ramp supermodels Valerie del Rosario and Nicolette Bell.

A cast of power women top-billed by Carmina Villaroel break their silence in "Kilikili Monologues" as they epitomize the struggle of Filipinas who need to pluck and shave their way to clean, beautiful underarms. The show also features the witty ensemble of Gladys Guevarra, Marissa Sanchez and Eugene Domingo.

Women from all walks of life can surely relate to each character's dilemma. Budding diva Minerva (Guevarra) learns too late that first impressions go a long way in show business, while working girl Lea's (Domingo) underarm issues get the better of her during an important meeting where she presents to her team and to an officemate she's been secretly eyeing.

Meanwhile, Elsa (Sanchez) the housewife, receives sympathetic nods when she woefully narrates how her dark and irritated underarms have made her less attractive to her husband.

"Women should not suffer in silence because they have dark and irritated underarms," says Villaroel. "That's why I'm taking an active role in helping educate women on proper underarm care."

Catch the Philippine premiere of the "Kilikili Monologues" as part of the "Under-harm Freedom with Rexona Pro Balance" campaign, in select malls, schools and universities in the coming months.

E-mail the author at jr_victorio@yahoo.com

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